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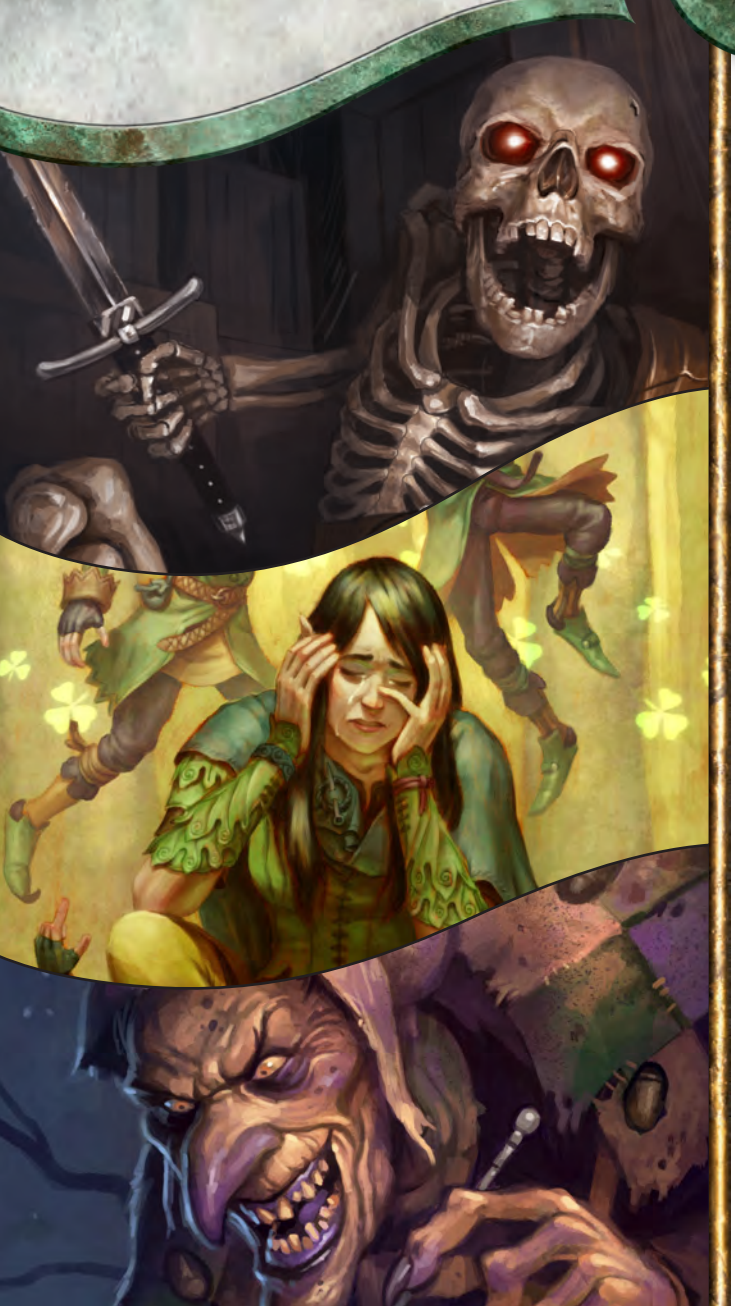
DUNGEON

A Dungeons & Dragons® Roleplaying Game Supplement

DUNGEON®



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ABOUT THE COVER: *A pixie adventurer evades Rotten Ethel's venomous viper familiar, Curdlemilk, in Matt Dixon's feature illustration for "Glitterdust."*

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DUNGEON *February 2013*

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Beyond Expectations

By Christopher Perkins

As we were putting this issue to bed, it occurred to me that all of the adventures this month are designed for low-level characters. That wasn't intentional, and I assure you, we have more high-level content planned for future issues. However, if you're a fan of low-level fare, February is your lucky month. (Next month we have an adventure for levels 28–30, so you high-level junkies won't have to wait long, I promise!)

We try to publish adventures for all levels of play, but we receive more adventure proposals for lower-level characters than higher-level ones. This has been true for every edition of the game, not just 4E. I remember Roger, Barbara, Wolfgang, and other editors before me bemoaning the lack of high-level fare, but when I analyze the metrics of the D&D Character Builder, it only reinforces my belief that most campaigns wrap up (either deliberately or by happenstance) long before the adventurers get anywhere close to epic level, so maybe having more low-level adventures isn't a bad thing. At least a DM has lots of options to choose from when the time comes to pick an adventure to kick off a new campaign.

Although we aim to publish adventures for all levels of play, level is not the most important consideration when I decide to buy and publish an adventure. I'm more interested in adventures that take us places we've never been before and put clever spins on old ideas. "Glitterdust," our feature adventure this month, is a great example. At its heart, it's a simple, straightforward rescue mission, except the "damsel in distress" is a pixie named Glitterdust and the biggest obstacle to the heroes' success is their diminutive size. Maybe you'll never run a D&D game (or campaign) for pixie characters, but as an idea I think it's worth putting out there. With its Disneyesque storyline and pixie protagonists, "Glitterdust" has the virtue of being unlike anything we've published before. If nothing else, I think it makes a great one-night break from the norm. The next time you're missing a player or two, break out a copy of *Heroes of the Feywild*™, urge your remaining players to roll up some 1st-level pixie characters, and send them on a quest to rescue poor Glitterdust from the clutches of the evil hag Rotten Ethel and her albino viper familiar, Curdlemilk. I'm willing to bet real Canadian loonies that everyone will have a terrific D&D experience!

"Fall of the Gray Veil" is another weird adventure, but much darker in tone. It's an idea I'd been kicking around for years and something I'd always wanted to write: an adventure where the heroes suddenly find themselves in a black-and-white world. Whereas "Glitterdust" takes a straightforward rescue mission and festoons it with quirky characters, "Fall of the Gray Veil" takes a familiar D&D cliché—the evil necromancer raising the dead—and wraps it in a very off-the-wall mystery.

Another thing we try to keep in mind when planning issue content is our monthly theme. This month, our theme is "fey." No adventure pushes the boundaries of D&D adventure design and captures the fey theme better than module UK1, *Beyond the Crystal Cave*, originally published by TSR in 1983. The version included in this issue is a 4th Edition adventure inspired by this timeless classic. At the core of the adventure is another well-worn cliché—a star-crossed romance gone awry—but what the adventure does with this idea goes beyond expectations.

Glitterdust

A D&D® adventure for 1st-level pixie characters

By Will Doyle

Illustrations by Matt Dixon

Cartography by Adam Phillips

A vast Feywild swamp slowly seethes into our world, conjured by a malevolent hag. The Murkendraw's unstoppable progress widens Rotten Ethel's dominion by a few steps each day, and with it, the hag's ambition.

When Rotten Ethel kidnaps the fairest pixie of all, the swamp's advance suddenly quickens. The fairy folk need brave heroes to turn back the tide and venture forth to rescue Glitterdust.

Background

The cottage of the hag Rotten Ethel slumps on stilts over a swampy lake far from civilization. Ringed by ancient weirdstones, the site is a nexus between the planes, a bridge between the world and the dark places beyond. For centuries, the hag harnessed the stones to draw discarded objects into her mire, half-broken things cast out by their owners before they were fully used up. By fixing these discards, Ethel forms a magical bond with the objects' former owners, allowing her to invade their homes and claim payment for her work. As recompense, she might take a treasured valuable, a beloved pet, or even a newborn child.

Powering the stones requires many precious ritual components. Ethel searched for the perfect mixture

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until at last she discovered the rare potency of pixie dust. Though each pixie can produce only so much dust before expiring, just one pinch tremendously widens the weirdstones' reach, allowing the hag to tap the Feywild and call forth the Murkendraw.

When Rotten Ethel's spies told her of a pixie whose splendor was without equal, the hag set out at once to capture her. Now, as the Murkendraw churns relentlessly into the world, she hatches plans to share her realm with her Feywild sisters and form a powerful coalition of hags.

Adventure Hooks

The hooks below can draw the characters into the adventure. Groups playing this adventure as a one-shot should run the material in the section called "King Sunfire's Court" as an introductory scene, which joins their characters together as part of the same pixie community.

Nature's Summons

The creeping swamp drove the woodland animals from their homes and destroyed their natural habitats. An unlikely alliance of foxes and hares arrives at the pixies' court, begging for order to be restored.

Rescue

News of Glitterdust's kidnapping has spread, but none have been brave enough to stage a rescue. Now she appears in dreams to her most devout suitors, promising marriage to the first pixie who finds her.

Flashback

Groups playing through other campaigns could still play "Glitterdust" as a form of unique flashback. Perhaps their existing characters seek an item (or person) that was taken long ago by the hag. By playing "Glitterdust" as a one-shot, the players can determine its whereabouts for themselves.

Pixie Adventurers

Playing characters in a same-race party can create a great sense of camaraderie. The specific challenges of playing pixies make them ideal for this purpose.

Rules for creating pixie characters are presented in *Player's Option: Heroes of the Feywild*™, and you can create characters quickly with the online D&D Character Builder. Players should be familiar with their racial abilities and are encouraged to exploit them wherever possible. An all-pixie adventure makes for a memorable break from a group's usual exploits.

Flight

Flying pixies fall at the end of their turn if they are higher up than 1 square, but that shouldn't stop them from landing on high ceiling beams, windowsills, or tree branches. Other pixies count as valid targets for the *pixie dust* power, granting them opportunities to maneuver off their turns.

Flight makes pixies practically immune to difficult terrain and turns common obstacles such as rivers and chasms into a cakewalk. Even if they do fall while flying, pixies can safely descend up to 30 feet without taking damage or falling prone.

Being Tiny Is a Big Thing

At less than 1 foot tall, pixies can take cover where other creatures cannot. That upturned bucket would not hide a halfling, but it could easily shield a pixie from view.

When in doubt about where a pixie can hide, apply the following optional rule: A pixie can hide from enemies if it ends its move inside a square of difficult terrain, but must stop flying to do so.

Pixies can also end their turns inside a larger creature's square. This makes any overlarge human good for more than just teasing, since pockets, backpacks, and cloaks are now great places to hide from sight.

Talking to Animals

The pixies' ability to speak to beasts allows for some amusing roleplaying encounters. Befriending an owl can grant limitless flight, and tracking is much easier when a character can question every creature that passes.

Set some limitations, though. Animals live by simple rules of survival, and they don't go out of their way to help other creatures without good cause. Just because pixies can communicate with them doesn't mean the fey can automatically command their obedience or attention. An animal might require incentive in the form of food or useful objects to answer a pixie's questions.

Pixie Superstitions

The Feywild is steeped in lore and its people bound by age-old rituals. Born of fey blood, pixies are particularly prone to superstitious belief. They often read ominous significance into the simplest events.

Pixie characters can choose to start with one of the following superstitions. Once per adventure, each character can earn a bonus action point by playing to his or her superstition at an inopportune moment.

d10	Pixie Superstition
1	Never pass a mushroom ring without stopping to dance a jig inside it.
2	Eat honey when you can.
3	Don't go down steps by starlight.
4	Every third answer given to a human must be a lie.
5	When in doubt, sing and shout.
6	Never hide inside the hollow of a dead tree.
7	It is bad luck to follow a human inside a house.
8	Never fly over flames.
9	Always knock before entering somebody else's home.
10	Never say "no" to a grasshopper.

King Sunfire's Court

This introduction awards the player character pixies with a set of flavorful magic items to aid their journey.

When you're ready to begin, read:
You have been summoned to the court of King Sunfire, lord of the pixies. Hundreds of tiny fey have gathered to hear him speak, and his glade is filled with tinkling voices. Woodland animals peer warily from the bushes while wild birds fill the canopy overhead. The king steps from his briar throne and silences the crowd with a sweep of his hand.

"My people!" he cries. "For years we've lived in fear of the bog hag, Rotten Ethel. We've heard what happens when she catches our kind, and we've wept for those who have fallen before her. My greatest warriors have been sent to slay her, and my wisest sorcerers plotted her downfall, all to no avail. Now her swamp grows larger by the day, and it encroaches at the very borders of my kingdom. Our animal friends been driven from their homes and seek sanctuary at our doorstep. Worse, news has come that she's kidnapped the fairest of all my subjects: Glitterdust, whose song heralds the height of summer."

Gasps are heard across the crowd.

"I hereby call upon those of heroic heart. Who among you dares to venture inside the creeping swamp and put an end to Rotten Ethel's evil?"

King Sunfire asks for an introduction from each adventurer who steps forward. The Dungeon Master should also ask each player to describe his or her character to the rest of the group.

After all the players have spoken, read:
An oak chest is brought forward by King Sunfire's guards. As its lid is thrown open, you gaze upon a pile of treasure.

"You may each choose one item to aid in your quest," the king says.

When the characters can see into the chest, read:
As you start to make your selection, the king offers the following warning. "Rotten Ethel is old and cruel, and she won't fall easily in combat. If you must do battle, find a way to weaken her first. Bide your time, avoid conflict where you can, and remember your pixie ways."

King Sunfire offers the adventurers a glowing moonstone held in a silver oyster shell (200 gp) as a reward for rescuing Glitterdust, and they receive the following quest.

MAJOR QUEST: FOIL THE HAG'S PLANS
1st-Level Major Quest (100 XP/character)
The characters earn this quest reward if they rescue Glitterdust and either kill Rotten Ethel or disable the weirdstones surrounding her cottage.

Once each player has made a choice from the chest, the characters are escorted to the edge of the swamp and their adventure begins in earnest.

Pixie Treasures

King Sunfire's treasure chest contains one of each item listed below.

Item	Price	Weight
Cold iron shavings (1 bag)*	50 gp	1 lb.
Flower of the dawn*	25 gp	—
Love philter	1,000 gp	1/2 lb.
Nightspider silk	50 gp	1 lb.
Owlbear musk	500 gp	1 lb.
Pixie music box*	50 gp	—
Senaliesse chrysanthemum*	10 gp	—
Tattlebugs (pair)	250 gp	—

***These items are detailed in *Player's Option: Heroes of the Feywild*.**

Love Philter

The Court of Stars delights in sowing affection between unlikely partners, turning chaste men into wild philanderers or making predators fall for their prey. When a drop of this honeyed draught is applied to a subject's lips, the victim falls madly in love with the next creature he or she sees, but only until the following morning.

Nightspider Silk

The spiders of Brokenstone Vale weave a thread that can be seen only by the light of the moon. When the clouds part, these silvered webs glow as though painted with gleaming dewdrops. A spool of nightspider silk is strong as a length of wire but wholly invisible during the day.

Owlbear Musk

Some brave hunters shadow owlbears in heat to track down the males. Centaurs are practiced in luring hormone-crazed owlbears into traps, and they can extract musk glands from a corpse in seconds.

A single whiff of owlbear musk is strong enough to bring an enchanted creature crashing back to reality, immediately ending any dazing, stunning, or dominating magical effects. Each pouch is good for three doses, after which its potency fades away.

Tattlebugs

When songs are sung in Senaliesse, the forests surrounding the city ring with beautiful echoes that emanate from the tattlebugs living in the trees. These scintillating beetles can mimic sound by rubbing their hind legs together.

The mimicry of adult tattlebugs is almost indistinguishable from the originator of the sound, so they're often used as spying devices. When placed in sight of another of its kind, a tattlebug repeats everything it has heard in the last five minutes.

Rumors about Rotten Ethel

The court of King Sunfire is rich with horrid tales about the hag. Each pixie character can make a DC 12 Streetwise check to uncover one of the following rumors, rolled randomly.

d10	Rumor
1	King Sunfire recently exiled a community of murk bats into the hag's territory, and now they work as her spies (true).
2	The hag cannot harm you if you travel unarmed (false).
3	If you discard a thing that could've been fixed, it might turn up in the hag's cottage. If she repairs it, she claims a terrible price in return (true).
4	The hag's cottage shifts through the planes, and those who stray near it could reemerge almost anywhere (false).
5	The hag's bestial slaves are cared for by a secretive spirit that sometimes aids travelers (true).
6	Hags hate salt and can't cross a line of it laid out on the ground (false).
7	Human villagers sometimes seek the hag's services as a midwife or travel to her cottage to learn their future (true).
8	The hag can't enter the same room twice during the same five minutes (false).
9	Something horrible lurks inside the mirror in the hag's bedroom (true).
10	The hag keeps a rabid rat as her familiar (false).

Running the Adventure

The adventure is structured around three loose acts. In the first, the pixies scout out the hag's cottage and try to find a way inside. Searching the interior forms the bulk of the second act, which ends with the discovery that a key is needed to free the pixie Glitterdust. The final act comprises the adventurers' attempts to steal this key from the hag.

Dungeon Masters should not feel bound by this structure. The player characters can approach the cottage from any angle, and clever players might discern many ways of getting inside. Allies can be won inside and out, and the hag's own forces can be turned against her.

The Hag's Timetable

Rotten Ethel is a creature of habit who sticks to a regular routine. Use the timetable below to keep track of her daily movements.

6 a.m.: Rotten Ethel wakes and gathers pixie dust from Glitterdust's jar (location 12). When she's finished, she sets the candle spinning beneath the jar.

6 to 6:30 a.m.: The hag goes to her kitchen (location 10) and drinks her morning dose of cough medicine.

6:30 to 7 a.m.: Ethel performs a quick circuit of the lake, stopping at each of the weirdstones to perform her daily enchantments (locations 3, 6, and 7).

7 to 9 a.m.: Helped by her bullywug servants, the hag carefully lays a new line of vegetables for her giant snail to follow (location 5).

9 to 9:30 a.m.: She returns home to check on Glitterdust, before heading out into the swamps.

9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Ethel spends the rest of the morning gathering fungus from the swamps.

12 to 1 p.m.: At midday she returns home to assess the morning's haul from the lake. Any items worth repairing are transferred to her workshop (location 9).

1 to 6 p.m.: Ethel spends her afternoons toiling away inside her workshop.

6 to 7 p.m.: As evening falls she retires to her kitchen to cook up a mushroom dinner and take her second dose of cough medicine.

7 p.m. to 1 a.m.: Evenings are spent in the study (location 11), where she consults dark tomes and passes instructions on to her familiar.

1 to 6 a.m.: Finally, she returns to her bedroom and catches a few hours' sleep.

Encountering the Hag

The characters can encounter Rotten Ethel at any turn. The hag is too powerful to face directly, so pixie characters should avoid conflict until they've found a way to weaken her. Ethel carries the key to Glitterdust's bell jar, so the characters can take it from her by various means.

Blindness

Rotten Ethel suffers from cataracts and can barely see through her bloated eyelids. When she needs to focus, she uses her cane to lift the lid over her one good eye. If she loses the cane, she takes a –5 penalty to attack rolls and Perception checks, but she can still see enemies as foggy outlines.

Creatures can snatch the cane from her during combat by performing a successful grab attack and then beating the hag in an opposed Athletics check.

Coughing Fits

Ethel keeps her wracking cough at bay by drinking a potent medicinal syrup. If she misses either of her daily doses, she cannot use the Stealth skill, cannot recharge her powers, and loses the ability to use one minor action per turn.

Ethel's medicine bottle is stored in the kitchen (location 10). If it goes missing, it takes her five hours to brew up more from her cauldron.

Familiar Death

Much of Ethel's power stems from her dark pact with her familiar. If Curdlemilk is slain, the hag deals minimum damage with all her attacks. She must also

roll twice for all attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, and skill checks, taking the lower of the two results. She can perform a ritual to summon another familiar during the next full moon.

Poisoning

Two poisons can be found during the course of the adventure. Deadly toadstools grow at the river crossing (location 3), and a soporific gas can be brewed from instructions found in the kitchen (location 10). The characters can add toadstools to Ethel's food or medicine, and they can throw the gas as a grenade.

The Hag's Spies

Rotten Ethel has an agreement with a local colony of murk bats. They spy on her behalf, and she leaves them alone. The bats hate the hag and perform their duties begrudgingly.

Every round of a disturbance (such as combat) outside the cottage has a 1-in-4 chance to draw the attention of a passing murk bat. Some bats wait to see what happens and then fly off to alert the hag if the pixies survive. Others might try blackmail instead, demanding fresh meat in return for their silence.

Treasure

This adventure uses the treasure parcel system and assumes a 1st-level party composed of five characters. The treasure parcels are allocated as follows:

1. Study (location 11)
2. Kitchen (location 10)
3. Workshop (location 9)
4. Study (location 11)
5. Major quest reward (see "King Sunfire's Court")
6. Study (location 11)
7. Workshop (location 9)
8. Kitchen (location 10)
9. Workshop (location 9)
10. Haunted River Crossing (location 3)

Rotten Ethel, Bog Hag **Level 8 Solo Skirmisher**
Medium fey humanoid (aquatic) XP 1,750

HP 360; **Bloodied** 180 **Initiative** +9
AC 22, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 17 **Perception** +6
Speed 8 (swamp walk), swim 8 Low-light vision
Saving Throws +5; **Action Points** 2

Traits

☼ **Unwholesome Presence ✦ Aura** 3
If an enemy in the aura spends a healing surge to regain hit points, that enemy regains only half the normal hit points.

Aquatic
Ethel can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, she gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against non-aquatic creatures.

Horrid Scuttle
On an initiative count of 10 + her initiative check, Ethel shifts up to half her speed and uses *claw frenzy* as a free action. If she cannot use a free action to make this attack due to a dominating or stunning effect, then that effect ends instead of Ethel making her attack.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claw ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 12 damage.
Effect: Ethel can shift up to 2 squares.

⸸ **Claw Frenzy ✦ At-Will**
Effect: Ethel uses *claw* twice.

Breathe Mosquitoes ✦ Recharge ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +11 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d6 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Shrieking Cackle (psychic) **✦ Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +11 vs. Will
Hit: 4d6 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.

Minor Actions

Skin Shift (polymorph) **✦ At-Will**
Effect: Ethel alters her physical form to appear as a young female elf, half-elf, eladrin, or human until she uses *change self* again or until she drops to 0 hit points. To assume a specific individual's form, Ethel must have seen that individual. Other creatures can make a DC 31 Insight check to discern that the form is a disguise.

Skills Intimidate +10, Nature +11, Stealth +12
Str 21 (+9) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 18 (+8) **Int** 11 (+4) **Cha** 13 (+5)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment shawl, sling bag full of mushrooms, cane, key

Choose magic items appropriate for your group where specified. Ritual scrolls and components found as treasure are designed for use within the adventure and do not count toward treasure parcels.

Approaching the Cottage

Rotten Ethel's cottage stands about seven miles from the swamp's ever-expanding border. As it oozes forward, the Murkendraw changes the climate around it. The air becomes hot and sticky and clouded by giant mosquitoes. Huge swamp cypresses shudder away from the murk, and grinning crocodiles slip through the warm waters beneath.

As the heroes approach the adventure site, read:
In the distance you spot a tumbledown cottage perched on stilts on the far shore of a lake. The cottage's thatched roof is shaped like a pointed witch's hat, and a lone window glows balefully near its tip. As you watch, the mists envelop the lake, and the hag's lair is snatched from sight.

The pixies arrive from the northern side of the map, just above location 1. Boggy animal trails encircle the lake, but the pixies needn't stick to them. By default, they arrive at the site at roughly 9 a.m.

BOG HAG'S LAIR
1 BULLYWUG COURT
2 CAGED COCKEREL
3 HAUNTED CROSSING
4 OTTER HOLTS
5 DREDGE NET
6 MURKBAT ROOST
7 MUDDY STIES
8 HAG'S COTTAGE

1. Bullywug Court

Combat Encounter Level 3 (825 XP)

Rotten Ethel's bullywug associates have captured a villager. The prisoner might be a useful ally—if only he can overcome his superstitious fear of pixies!

Light: Bright in the day, dim starlight at night.

Monsters: 2 bullywug muckers, 1 bullywug mud lord, 1 murklord frog.

Hazard: Gorgon mud.

As the characters approach this area, read:

You hear a cry for help ahead of you. Through the trees, you spot a pair of misshapen toad-men cavorting beneath a dangling net trap. A red-faced human struggles in its bonds, his contorted body swinging above a pool of bubbling green mud. A third toad-man sits imperiously on a nearby mushroom, wearing a wig of tangled swamp weed and holding an immense frog on a leash. As the captive struggles, the wig-wearing toad pokes at the man with a stick.

Arcana DC 14: The character correctly identifies the gorgon mud.

Perception DC 14: The character spots the petrified bodies of swamp creatures protruding from the gorgon mud's depths.

The bullywugs are staging a mock trial. As the human struggles in the net, the bullywug leader levies a litany of crimes against him, ranging from indecent cleanliness to gross trespass. They plan to torment the captive in this manner for an hour before dumping him into the gorgon mud.

With their attention focused on their captive, the bullywugs are easy to ambush or sneak up on (passive Perception score of 9). Rotten Ethel warned them to watch out for pixies, so they attack on sight. They know that captured pixies please Ethel more than dead ones, but that won't stop the bullywugs from fighting dirty if they feel outmatched.

2 Bullywug Muckers	**Level 1 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (aquatic)	XP 100 each
HP 34; **Bloodied** 17	**Initiative** +2
AC 22, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 17	**Perception** +0
Speed 6 (swamp walk), swim 4	
Traits	
☼ **Rancid Air** (poison) ✦ **Aura** 2	
Each enemy that spends a healing surge within the aura is weakened until the end of its next turn.	
Aquatic	
The bullywug can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against non-aquatic creatures.	
Nature's Release (healing)	
Any attacker that scores a critical hit against the bullywug regains 3 hit points.	
Swamp Walk	
The bullywug ignores difficult terrain that is mud or shallow water.	
Standard Actions	
⨺ **Spear** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 2 damage, plus 1d6 extra damage against a prone target.	
⨺ **Bullywug Rush** ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Requirement: The bullywug charges and makes the following attack instead of a melee basic attack.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 3d6 + 6 damage, plus 1d6 extra damage against a prone target, and the target falls prone.	
Miss: The bullywug takes 3 damage and falls prone.	
Skills Athletics +8	
Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 10 (+0)	
Con 14 (+2) **Int** 6 (-2) **Cha** 8 (-1)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Primordial	
Equipment leather armor, spear	

Net Trap

The net is old and rotten, and it won't last long if left untended. One of the bullywugs grasps the hoisting line while court is in session. The creature releases it when combat begins, leaving the captive at the mercy of the fates.

Make a saving throw for the line at the end of each round. On a failure, one of the strands splits loudly. If three separate saving throws are failed, the hoisting line snaps and the net plunges into the mud.

Freeing the villager requires three separate DC 14 Thievery checks, or a single DC 19 Athletics check to break the net. Attempting to do so while the net is submerged is considerably more difficult, requiring the character to descend into the gorgon mud and raising the DCs of all checks by 5.

Mud Pools

Creatures entering a mud pool or starting their turn inside are slowed until the end of their next turn. Creatures with a swim speed are immune.

The Captive

The bullywugs' captive is a villager named Brandel, eldest son of a local basket weaver. Armed with his grandfather's sword and dressed in ill-fitting scale, Brandel ventured into the swamp to rescue his beloved Luella, who had been kidnapped by the hag's wicked sorcery. Though the human stands little

Murklord Frog	**Level 2 Skirmisher**
Medium natural beast (aquatic)	XP 125
HP 39; **Bloodied** 19	**Initiative** +7
AC 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13	**Perception** +4
Speed 6, swim 6	Low-light vision

Traits

Aquatic

The murklord can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against non-aquatic creatures.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC

Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage, or 1d12 + 5 while the murklord is bloodied.

Leapfrog ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚄ ⚃

Effect: The murklord shifts up to 3 squares, makes the following attack, and shifts up to 3 squares again.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +5 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, or 2d12 + 4 while the murklord is bloodied.

Minor Actions

Tongue Lash ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +5 vs. Reflex

Hit: The murklord slides the target 1 square.

Skills Acrobatics +10

Str 16 (+4)	**Dex** 18 (+5)	**Wis** 16 (+4)
Con 15 (+3)	**Int** 4 (-2)	**Cha** 8 (+0)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

chance of beating Ethel on his own, his mistrust of Feywild creatures makes him wary of joining forces with the "good folk" even if they are his rescuers.

Refer to the sidebar when roleplaying Brandel and be sure to bring his superstitions into play during conversation. Perhaps he refuses to confer with the pixies until he has thrown sawdust at their feet or plucked a lock of hair from his head and burned it before them. Once he's ready to talk, read or paraphrase the following statements to answer the characters' questions.

Bullywug Mud Lord	**Level 3 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid (aquatic)	XP 150
HP 39; **Bloodied** 19	**Initiative** +3
AC 17, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 16	**Perception** +9
Speed 6 (swamp walk), swim 4	

Traits

☼ **Rancid Air** (poison) ✦ **Aura** 2

Each enemy that spends a healing surge within the aura is weakened until the end of its next turn.

Aquatic

The bullywug can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against non-aquatic creatures.

Nature's Release (healing)

Any attacker that scores a critical hit against the bullywug regains 5 hit points.

Necessary Sacrifices

The bullywug gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls when it makes an area or close attack and includes at least one ally in the blast or burst.

Swamp Walk

The bullywug ignores difficult terrain that is mud or shallow water.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Quarterstaff** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit: 1d8 + 7 damage.

Electric Reflux (cold, lightning) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅

Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +6 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d6 + 5 cold and lightning damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the bullywug's next turn.

Miss: Half damage.

Fiery Croak (fire, thunder) ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Area burst 1 within 20 (creatures in the burst); +6 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d10 + 4 fire and thunder damage.

Skills Arcana +6, Nature +9

Str 12 (+2)	**Dex** 14 (+3)	**Wis** 16 (+4)
Con 15 (+3)	**Int** 11 (+1)	**Cha** 10 (+1)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Primordial

Equipment quarterstaff

Gorgon Mud	**Level 8 Trap**
Hazard	XP 350
Detect Arcana or Perception DC 14	**Initiative** –
Immune attacks	

Traits

Thick Mud

The mud is difficult terrain.

Triggered Actions

Attack ✦ **At-Will**

Trigger: A creature that has neither earth walk nor immunity to petrification enters a square containing the mud.

Attack (Opportunity Action): Melee 0 (triggering creature); +11 vs. Fortitude

Hit: The target is immobilized (save ends).

First Failed Saving Throw: The target is restrained instead of immobilized (save ends).

Second Failed Saving Throw: The target is petrified instead of restrained (save ends).

Miss: The target is slowed (save ends).

Countermeasures

✦ **Resist:** Athletics DC 14 (move action). *Success:* The character or one adjacent creature gains a +2 bonus to its next saving throw against the mud's effect.

✦ **Siphon:** Arcana DC 19 (standard action). *Success:* The character siphons elemental energy from the mud, rendering inert 1 square plus 1 square for every 5 points by which the check result exceeds the DC.

Who are you?

"Oh, I know your tricks, greenshanks. Say it thrice and you'll have my soul, say it twice and you'll steal my heart. So I'll tell you but once: My name is Brandel, and I am wise to your pixie magic."

What are you doing here?

"I suppose there's no harm in telling. My poor love Luella has been taken by the bog hag. Dragged down into the very earth beneath her feet, she was. Now I aim to get her back, or die trying—for alas, it was I who caused her suffering!"

How? What did you do?
"Last night I asked Luella for her hand in marriage, but she turned me down. My heart broken, I bent the ring meant for her hand out of shape and threw it into the river. This morning I awoke to find it mended on my pillow. I ran to fetch Luella, but it was too late! The hag had snatched her away.

"Don't you see? It's just like the rhyme: 'Throw away a broken thing that's almost good as new, Rotten Ethel mends it up and comes to claim her due.' That wicked hag repaired my broken ring and took the one thing that I love in return—my darling Luella!"

What do you know about Rotten Ethel?
"Her heart is black as pitch, and her evil knows no bounds. They say she takes frogs as her lovers, and that she swims through the swamp on the back of a giant turtle. The animals are her slaves, and she keeps their hearts locked away in a casket so that none can defy her."

How are you planning to rescue Luella?
"This blade belonged to my grandfather. He was a great hero in the war, so I'm hoping some of his glory finds its way to me through his steel. Alas, it's not done so yet. Were it not for you, I'd be buried in that mire forever."

If the pixies want to join forces, Brandel can be persuaded to join the party as a companion character. If not, he pushes on alone. He can always show up again by rushing to the party's aid when they most—or least!—need it, or by falling into one of Ethel's traps.

BRANDEL

Wild-haired and just a little overweight, young Brandel hardly fits the mold of a hero. Despite his shortcomings, his desperation to rescue Luella has awoken a stubborn resolve inside him. Even when gripped by fear, he simply won't turn back.

Brandel	**Level 1 Defender**
Medium natural humanoid, human	
HP 29; **Bloodied** 14; **Healing Surges** 8	**Initiative** +0
AC 18, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13	**Perception** -1
Speed 5	
Traits	
☼ **Flailing Defense** ✦ **Aura** 1	
When an enemy adjacent to Brandel misses him or one of his allies with an attack, it takes 4 damage and Brandel is dazed until the start of his next turn.	
Standard Actions	
⨺ **Longsword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 3 damage.	
⨺ **Furious Slash** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 3 damage, and Brandel can push the target 1 square.	
Effect: One ally adjacent to Brandel can shift 1 square.	
Skills Athletics +8, Nature +4	
Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 10 (+0) **Wis** 9 (-1)	
Con 14 (+2) **Int** 9 (-1) **Cha** 12 (+1)	
Alignment good **Languages** Common	
Equipment scale armor, longsword, lucky rabbit's foot	

Brandel comes from a small village, and he has been raised to fear the Feywild. To him, pixies are cunning tricksters who snatch newborn babies from their cots and replace them with changelings, or sour milk if bread crusts aren't left out at night. Consult the table on the next page to bring some of Brandel's superstitions into play. Most are based on ignorance and hearsay, but some—at the DM's discretion—could ring true.

d10	Brandel's Superstition
1	He thinks he can see the pixies because he carries a four-leaf clover.
2	If he loses his four-leaf clover and can still see the pixies, he thinks it's because he was born at night.
3	He wears his hat backward to confuse pixies who might want him to join their dance.
4	Wherever possible, he tries to stand to the right of the pixies.
5	He blows on any items the pixies give him to rid them of their magic.
6	He hangs a horseshoe from his backpack to ward off hags.
7	He carries a rabbit's foot for good luck and sometimes fiddles with it when he's nervous.
8	He is afraid of leaving the trail while in the pixies' company.
9	If he sneezes in front of the pixies, he ties another knot in his handkerchief.
10	He never wears anything green for fear that it might attract gnomes.

2. Caged Cockerel

Exploration Encounter

The hag uses a half-starved cockerel as a cruel form of doorbell. Months of starvation and deprivation have driven it quite mad, but the pixies can wrest some sense from it if they treat it kindly.

When the characters first approach, read:
The trail winds through cattails and sawgrass to the banks of a misty lake. You spot a crooked jetty jutting out over the still waters, its aged planks sagged with rot. A half-starved rooster perches in a birdcage at the jetty's end, a severed human hand hanging from its ankle by a length of twine.

The cockerel starts to squawk when the pixies approach. Since the pixies understand the language of beasts, they immediately realize that it's talking nonsense.

"Snowbells and gristle, broken toothy-pegs, black skies by day, dog hair and damp, dog hair and damp!"

The cockerel continues to babble for as long as the pixies remain in sight. It only makes sense if fed or tended to kindly. If treated so, it turns suddenly to one of the pixies and whispers, "She needs her cane to see, don't you see?" before descending into madness again.

Summoning the Pumpkin Barge

Yanking the severed hand causes the cockerel to crow painfully, summoning Rotten Ethel's pumpkin barge from the mists.

If a pixie pulls the severed hand, read:
The cockerel's echoing call is answered by the lapping of oars from the lake. Lit by jack-o'-lanterns, a ramshackle rowboat emerges from the mist, its oars turning of their own accord. The rowboat grinds up against the jetty with a bloodcurdling groan and is still.

Rotten Ethel's earthly guests use this rowboat to cross the lake to her cottage. After those on the jetty have boarded, the rowboat magically paddles across the lake to drop them off at the boggy mud bank near the front door (location 7). As they exit, those who crossed the lake on the boat are enchanted with a spell that prevents them from triggering the hag's screaming scarecrows until dawn the following day.

3. Haunted Crossing

Combat Encounter Level 1 (600 XP)

This ancient river crossing is haunted by the restless spirits of a drowned girl, the wicked stepmother who murdered her, and the girl's cousin. Those who venture nearby risk being trapped in a deadly retelling of the spirits' downfall.

Light: Bright in the day, dim starlight at night.
Monsters: 1 wraith, 8 wisp wraiths.
Hazard: Haunted river.

When the characters first approach, read:
A grove of gnarled cypresses stoop over the riverbank, their bearded lichens trailing into the water beneath. A tall monolith stands among them on the northern bank, lit by twinkling glowworms. At its base, a line of mossy stepping stones strikes a meandering path across the water.

Perception DC 19: The character spots three tangled masses of rotten cloth, human bone, and muddy driftwood caught up in the roots of the riverbank. These are the sodden remains of the family killed here.

Nature DC 14: The character identifies a patch of deadly toadstools near the monolith, a milky fungus called granny's grief.

This was once the site of a terrible murder. A young girl was drowned here by her stepmother, who'd led her into the swamp to pick mushrooms for her dying father. Suspicious that his uncle was being poisoned, the girl's cousin followed them here, but arrived just too late to save her. Seeing his cousin's head held underwater, he rushed from the bushes and hacked the stepmother into pieces, but he was caught by her poisoned needle as she fell. Now their restless spirits haunt the grove, luring passersby to a watery grave.

The haunted river rolls initiative and attacks with surprise as soon as the adventurers are close. Once the surprise round is complete, the wraiths rise up from the mist to attack.

Ghostly Visions

The haunted river forces adventurers to relive the last moments of the murders, turning them against their own companions or pitching them underwater.

When a character receives the daughter's vision, read:

"Stepmother leads you to the grove where the medicine grows. Your mind tangled with worry for your father, you gather your skirts about your knees and wade into the water. Suddenly you feel her knotted hands close around your throat, and you're forced under water!"

When a character receives the stepmother's vision, read:

"A cruel smile crawls over your face as the girl wades into the river. Those toadstools will soon do their work on your pudding of a husband, and that little sow won't be claiming any inheritance from the bottom of the river!"

When a character receives the cousin's vision, read:

"You were too late! Hellbent on revenge, you take up your uncle's axe and charge into the river. Again and again you hack into his wife until the water rushes red with her blood. Only then do you feel the pin that she pricked into your arm, and your vision swims with sickness."

Characters who succumb to the haunted river's domination are consumed by their vision until the effect ends. For those who resist, the vision lasts just a couple of seconds.

The Weirdstone

This rune-carved monolith is one of three weirdstones Rotten Ethel harnessed to channel the Murkendraw into this world. The pixies can reverse the enchantment using the Call the Weird ritual found in the hag's study (location 11).

Poison Toadstools

Rings of poisoned toadstools encircle the monolith, emitting a sickly sweet odor that can be smelled by anyone passing nearby. The toadstools are harmless unless ingested.

Granny's Grief Level 5 Poison

The spore sacs of this slimy toadstool can be milked to concoct a maddening poison that induces sickness, sorrow, and ultimately death.

Poison 50 gp

Attack: +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 5 poison damage, and the target is weakened (save ends)
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is dazed and weakened (save ends both).
Second Failed Saving Throw: The target is dazed and weakened until it takes an extended rest. If the target receives another dose of granny's grief during this time, it dies.

Special: You apply the poison to an item of food or up to one gallon of liquid. A creature that consumes the food or drink is subject to the attack 1 round later. A successful DC 22 Nature check or Perception check can reveal the presence of granny's grief in food or drink.

Wraith **Level 5 Lurker**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead) XP 200

HP 53; **Bloodied** 26 **Initiative** +10
AC 19, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 15 **Perception** +2
Speed 0, fly 6 (hover); phasing Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic

Traits

Insubstantial
The wraith takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force damage. Whenever the wraith takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.

Spawn Wraith
When the wraith kills a humanoid, that humanoid becomes a wraith figment at the start of this wraith's next turn. The new wraith appears in the space where the humanoid died or in the nearest unoccupied square, and it rolls a new initiative check. The new wraith acts under the Dungeon Master's control.

Standard Actions

Shadow Touch (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage, or 4d6 + 14 necrotic damage if the wraith was invisible to the target when it attacked.

Triggered Actions

Shadow Glide (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An attack that does not deal force or radiant damage hits the wraith.
Effect (Free Action): The wraith becomes invisible until it hits or misses with an attack or until the end of the encounter. The wraith teleports up to 6 squares and cannot attack until the end of its next turn.

Skills Stealth +11

Str 4 (-1)	**Dex** 18 (+6)	**Wis** 10 (+2)
Con 17 (+5)	**Int** 6 (+0)	**Cha** 15 (+4)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Treasure

Pixies searching the river crossing find a scattering of submerged coins near the stepping stones (10 gp and 80 sp), a platinum thimble shaped like a clawed fingernail (12 gp), and an old town crier's bell with a missing clapper (10 gp). Together, this haul accounts for treasure parcel 10.

8 Wisp Wraiths	Level 1 Minion Skirmisher
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)	XP 25 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +3
AC 13, **Fortitude** 11, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 12	**Perception** +0
Speed 0, fly 6 (hover); phasing	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Shadow Caress** (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4 necrotic damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the wisp wraith's next turn.	
Move Actions	
Shadow Glide ✦ **Encounter**	
Effect: The wisp wraith shifts up to 6 squares.	
Skills Stealth +8	
Str 3 (-4) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+0)	
Con 13 (+1) **Int** 4 (-3) **Cha** 15 (+2)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common.	

4. Otter Holes

Exploration Encounter

This miserable community of otters has been coerced into the hag's service. The otters now toil day and night to dredge junk from her nets.

When the characters approach this area, read:
Up ahead you spy a ragged mud bank on the shore of the lake. Numerous otters dart back and forth from the water's edge, sorting rusted, rotten items into messy piles outside their burrows. Curiously, the otters work in total silence, with not a whisper passing between them.

The otters' voices have been stolen by the hag's sorcery. She keeps them in a music box inside her workshop (location 9). Fearful of invoking her wrath, the otters hide at the first sign of strangers.

Junk Piles

The junk piles contain knickknacks thrown away before their time and then drawn here by the magic of the bog. The otters retrieve them from the nets, sort them into piles, and then paddle the most useful looking items over to the hag's cottage.

Characters searching the piles can find just about anything, as long as it's cheap. Use the following table to determine the results of their search, or simply ask the player to think of an item and then roll a die to see if they find it. Everything is broken in some way and might require special tools to repair.

Haunted River	Level 1 Elite Trap
Hazard	XP 200
Detect automatic	**Initiative** +3
Immune attacks	
Standard Actions	
Attack ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +4 vs. Will	
Hit: 1d10 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is dominated until the end of the river's next turn. The target's standard action while dominated is determined by the DM's choice of vision (see below).	
Daughter's Vision: The target moves its speed toward the river and falls prone. If it ends its turn prone in the river, it takes 1d8 + 3 damage.	
Stepmother's Vision: The target charges its nearest ally and uses *bull rush* against it. If the ally is pushed into the river, it falls prone and takes 1d8 + 3 damage.	
Cousin's Vision: The target charges and makes a melee basic attack against its nearest ally.	
Countermeasures	
✦ **Exorcise:** Arcana DC 19 or Religion DC 14 (standard action). *Requirement:* The character must be adjacent to one of the three corpses. *Success:* The corpse's restless spirit is laid to rest, preventing the river from choosing that spirit when it makes an attack. The haunted river is disabled once all three spirits have been laid to rest, and any wraiths still active in the area are destroyed.	

Recovering the Otters' Voices

The pixies can reunite the otters with their voices by unwinding the music box from location 9 in their presence.

If the characters unwind the music box here, read:
Streams of wispy blue light drift from the music box, carrying a cacophony of growls and yelps. Their eyes alive with hope, the otters leap forward to snatch back their voices, dancing and barking with joy as they're returned. As they celebrate, a gray-bearded elder waddles over to address you.

"Wood-friends," he barks. "My people must flee, but we are forever in your debt. If you must stay, know that the witch draws her power from a tiny white viper, which she keeps in a casket in her study. The serpent's weakness is pride, for I once heard it whisper of its hold over her. Slay it, and you cripple the witch forever." With that, the otter bounds off to rejoin its people.

The otters waste no time in fleeing the swamp, leaving Rotten Ethel to dredge her nets by herself. After she finds out her laborers have flown the coop, she changes her routine to work the net in the mornings. Aware that intruders might have broken inside, she also checks more regularly on her captives.

Goodberry

The otters are cared for by a mysterious swampland creature called Goodberry. This elusive being leaves food for their pups, soothes their aching bones while they sleep, and whispers kindnesses to them in dreams. It despises the hag for what she has done to them, and it gladly aids those who oppose her.

Goodberry's favored form is a giant grasshopper clad in chainmail of emerald hue. Its appearance is foreshadowed by a gust of wind. The adventurers can encounter it any time they're near the otters, but only if they go out of their way to help them. If they behave threateningly, Goodberry assails them from afar with mysterious blasts of wind or sings long-forgotten rhymes that send them nodding off to sleep.

Goodberry can explain what has happened to the otters' voices and point the pixies to where they're held (the workshop at location 9). Too frightened to accompany them any closer, Goodberry instead uses

its magic to veil their progress through the swamps. After meeting Goodberry, pixies taking an extended rest within the swamp are magically hidden from prying eyes, and receive a +5 bonus to any Stealth checks they make in the wild. These enchantments fade when they leave the swamp.

5. Dredge Net

Skill Challenge Level 1 (300 XP)

Pulled by a giant snail, this titanic net endlessly dredges the lake for throwaway items. During this encounter, the adventurers have the chance to win over the hag's bestial workforce and maybe even meet the secretive spirit that cares for them.

This encounter can take place anywhere along the lake shore, at any time of day.

When the characters approach this area, read:

Groaning and grinding through the mists comes a snail the size of an ox cart, its shell chained to a gigantic dredge net. The net's tow line spans the surface of the lake, terminating in a muddy gear just beneath the hag's cottage. As it trundles along, dozens of otters paddle between the nets to recover their haul: broken chairs, pans without handles, sodden clothing, and more. Steaming piles of vegetables line the shore, luring the snail forward on a ponderous orbit around the lake.

As you watch, a sudden commotion breaks out among the otters. One of them has been accidentally caught in the nets and is being dragged underwater. The others scramble to free it, but they are unable to bite through the net. Unless someone takes action now, the otter will surely drown!

The Giant Snail

The giant snail lacks the apparatus to talk. Huge and dumb, its sole purpose in life seems to be lumbering from one pile of food to the next, ignoring all interruption. If the characters try to force it from its path, it lashes out at them.

d10	Junk Item
1	Set of prison manacles with a loose bolt
2	Fine dwarven belt with a broken silver buckle
3	Griffon saddle with a missing stirrup
4	Formal dinner jacket with a single missing button
5	Fencing foil with a kink in the blade
6	Nautical telescope with a cracked lens
7	Pair of knitting needles with a half-finished scarf still attached
8	Torn battle standard splattered with blood
9	Painted child's sled with a missing runner
10	Impressive feather quill with a split nib

The giant snail can be led off course by diverting the trail of vegetables. Though this can't be done in time to save the otter, it does serve as a dramatic act of sabotage. Led from the lake, the overstretched tow line ultimately wrenches the gear out from under the cottage, collapsing a significant portion of the kitchen and upper floor study. The hag becomes furious if this occurs, and she hunts doggedly for the culprits.

Giant Snail — **Level 3 Elite Brute**
Huge natural beast — XP 300

HP 120; **Bloodied** 60 — **Initiative** -1
AC 15, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 15 — **Perception** +2
Speed 3 (swamp walk) — Low-light vision
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Standard Actions

Slam ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 3 damage.

Bullying Slam ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 3 damage, the snail can push the target 1 square, and the target falls prone. The slug can then shift 1 square.

Slug's Rush ✦ At-Will
Effect: The slug uses *bullying slam* twice.

Str 20 (+6) **Dex** 6 (-1) **Wis** 11 (+2)
Con 20 (+6) **Int** 2 (-3) **Cha** 3 (-3)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Goodberry — **Level 4 Artillery**
Medium fey magical beast — XP 175

HP 42; **Bloodied** 21 — **Initiative** +5
AC 16, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 15 — **Perception** +12
Speed 6, fly 8 — Low-light vision

Standard Actions

Kick (illusion) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 8 damage.

Blast of Wind ✦ At-Will
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +9 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage, Goodberry slides the target up to 5 squares, and the target falls prone.

Golden Slumbers ✦ Encounter
Attack: Area burst 1 within 20 (surprised enemies in the burst); +9 vs. Will
Hit: The target falls unconscious (save ends).

Minor Actions

Fade from Sight (illusion) **✦ At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: Goodberry ends its turn and becomes invisible until the end of its next turn or it hits or misses with an attack.

Skills Acrobatics +10, Nature +12
Str 14 (+4) **Dex** 16 (+5) **Wis** 20 (+7)
Con 12 (+3) **Int** 9 (+1) **Cha** 14 (+4)
Alignment good **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment chainmail

Skill Challenge: Rescuing the Otter

The otter is caught up in the nets 30 feet from the shore. The knots tighten as the cable shifts forward, slowly choking its captive in a twisting ruin of mud, junk, and tangled netting.

Level: 1.

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Athletics, Endurance, Thievery.

Athletics (DC 19, standard action; three successes maximum): Pixies flying close to the trapped otter can pull and tear at the tangled nets to ease the pressure.

Endurance (DC 12, standard action; difficulty rises to DC 19 after one success): Bracing the cable slows the snail's progress, giving the otter a chance to struggle

free. Though moderately easy at first, maintaining the hold over time requires heroic endurance.

Thievery (DC 12, standard action; three successes maximum): Crafty pixies can spy which lines to snip and which to untie.

Secondary Skills: Nature, Perception, Heal. These skills don't grant successes or failures, but instead grant special benefits whenever successful checks are made.

Nature (DC 14, standard action): The giant snail can be distracted by stroking its horns, easing the pressure on the line and granting two successes for the next successful primary skill check instead of one.

Perception (DC 12, minor action): Those keeping a close eye on the net's movements can tell when it's best to take action, granting a +2 bonus to the next primary skill check.

Heal (DC 12, standard action; difficulty rises to 19 after one success): Pixies flying close to the distressed otter can attempt to soothe its wounds, removing one failure from the challenge with each successful check. Such help becomes more difficult the farther the line is dragged.

Success: The bedraggled otter is freed from the nets and limps back to its burrow. The others carry on with their business, but they now dash to warn the characters whenever the hag is close. If the spirit hasn't made itself known already, now's a good time to introduce Goodberry.

Failure: The poor otter drowns in the net. Additionally, the whole sorry affair is witnessed by one of the murk bats from location 6. It flies off at once to alert the hag to the characters' presence.

6. Murk Bat Roost

Combat Encounter Level 1 (600 XP)

Ethel's spies roost in this clearing within a stand of broken trees. Exiled from the outside world, they spend much of their time scheming against their new mistress.

Monsters: 5 murk bat clouds.

Light: Bright during the day, dim starlight at night.

When the characters approach this area, read:
The woods part to reveal a dreadful, rune-carved standing stone. Five dead trees surround it, their withered branches cradling the stone in a corpse-like embrace. A vast colony of bats hangs from the trees' deadened limbs, whispering and snickering at your approach.

The murk bats start heckling the pixies as they approach, making barbed comments about their diminutive size and threatening to call to their mistress. Their taunts rapidly turn ugly, and soon the pixies are surrounded by angry swarms.

Use the following skill challenge to handle the confrontation. Though they despise Ethel for her cruelty, the bats harbor also considerable resentment toward pixies since they were banished here long ago by the pixie king. The heroes' only hope is to win them over with honeyed words or bold threats. If they succeed, they earn a valuable weapon in their war against the hag: disinformation.

Skill Challenge: Dealing with the Bats

The bats swirl around the characters in shrieking clouds, driving them toward the standing stone at the clearing's center. Three of their wiliest members act as speakers for the rest and have higher than normal intelligence for their kind (Intelligence 10). One bat angles for them to be handed over to the hag, another wants to kill them, and a third calls for their use as pawns. Though the odds seem stacked against them, all three bats gladly betray the hag if the pixies present a good enough argument.

Level: 3.

Complexity: 5 (requires 12 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate. If a character succeeds at a primary skill check by 5 or more, the party gains two successes instead of one.

Bluff (DC 12, standard action; difficulty rises to DC 19 after first success): The character tries to flummox the bats with lies but soon finds they're shrewder than they look.

Diplomacy (DC 8, standard action; difficulty rises to DC 12 after the first failed Bluff or Intimidate check): The character seeks to resolve the dispute through negotiation. Offers to revoke the bats' exile grant two successes instead of one.

Intimidate (DC 12, standard action): Undaunted by danger, the character lays down some potent threats of his or her own. Failure here causes the character to be lashed by dive bombers for 1d6 + 3 damage.

Secondary Skills: History, Insight, Nature. These skills don't grant successes or failures, but instead grant special benefits whenever successful checks are made.

History (DC 8, standard action; difficulty rises to DC 12 after one success): Knowing that the bats were exiled provides valuable ammunition, granting a +2 bonus to the next primary skill check.

Insight (DC 12, standard action; difficulty rises to DC 19 after one success): Leveraging the bats' hatred for Ethel grants one extra success on the party's next primary skill check.

Nature (DC 8, standard action): The pixies know the nature of bats and can easily appeal to their haughty temperaments. Success here grants a +2 bonus to the next skill check.

Special: Pixies who present a Senaliesse chrysanthemum as part of their negotiations are granted four automatic successes.

Success: Tensions with the bats ease, and they offer the pixies an uneasy alliance.

Failure: The bats swarm forward to attack, either to kill the pixies where they stand or beat them into submission as a gift for the hag. For every pair of successes earned in the skill challenge, one murk bat cloud hangs back from combat. If the pixies survive, the remaining bats plead for an alliance.

The Weirdstone

This is one of three weirdstones used to channel the Murkendraw. The pixies can reverse the enchantment by using the Call the Weird ritual found in the hag's study (location 11).

Rotten Ethel energized this particular stone with necrotic energy to aid her midnight rituals. During combat, creatures falling unconscious within 5 squares of the stone automatically fail any death saving throws they make.

An Alliance of Bats

Pixies who win over the bats have several hundred double agents at their disposal. Expert tricksters, the bats are more than willing to feed Ethel false leads, but they stop short of direct confrontation. Murk bats also make useful mounts for the pixies, letting them wing quickly between locations or spy on the hag from on high.

5 Murk Bat Clouds	**Level 3 Skirmisher**
Medium aberrant beast (swarm)	XP 150 each
HP 49; **Bloodied** 24	**Initiative** +7
AC 17, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 14	**Perception** +6
Speed 2 (clumsy), fly 6	
Immune gaze; **Resist** half damage from melee and ranged attacks; **Vulnerable** 5 to close and area attacks	
Traits	
☼ **Swarm Attack ✦ Aura** 1	
Enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls. An enemy that ends its turn in the aura takes 3 damage.	
Swarm	
The cloud can occupy the same space as another creature, and an enemy can enter its space, which is difficult terrain. The cloud cannot be pulled, pushed, or slid by melee or ranged attacks. It can squeeze through any opening that is large enough for at least one of the creatures it comprises.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Swarm of Slashing Wings ✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to AC and Reflex until the end of its next turn.	
✧ **Unearthly Shriek** (psychic) **✦ Encounter**	
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +6 vs. Will	
Hit: 3d6 + 6 psychic damage.	
Triggered Actions	
↯ **Weird Shift ✦ At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy within 3 squares of the cloud hits the cloud with a close or area attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The cloud shifts up to 3 squares to a square adjacent to the triggering enemy, then uses *swarm of slashing wings* against the enemy.	
Str 13 (+2) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 11 (+1)	
Con 17 (+4) **Int** 2 (-3) **Cha** 14 (+3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

The bats don't know much about the cottage's interior, but they have seen Glitterdust through the bedroom window and have a vague idea of what Ethel is doing with her. They don't know about Ethel's familiar. They can reveal that she recently brought a human woman into her service. They also tell the pixies about the hag's dependency on cough medicine.

If the characters discuss how to fight the hag, read:
"I know how to beat her," whispers one of the murk bats. "We've all heard that cough of hers. Imagine what it'd be like if she mislaid her medicine? We just need to make sure it goes missing from her kitchen, or better yet, swap it for something nasty, like those toadstools we've seen growing by the crossing."

The bats direct the pixies to the poisonous toadstools growing at location 3. Though they can't administer them themselves, they'll gladly distract Ethel while the characters break inside for her medicine.

7. Muddy Sties

Combat Encounter Level 1 (550 XP)

The final approach to Rotten Ethel's cottage is not without danger. Giant frogs lurk in the pools, and the path is lined by screaming scarecrows.

Light: Bright in the day, dim starlight at night.

Monsters: 3 thornskin frogs, 2 sporeback frogs.

When the characters approach this area, read:
A rickety wooden fence marks the perimeter of the hag's property. Her cottage looms some distance beyond, perched on stilts at the end of a slippery, weed-choked mud bank. Pools of mosquito-infested water pockmark the ground, and a line of rotten scarecrows stakes the winding path to the front porch. A crooked standing stone leans from the mud behind the fence, next to a sign reading "Beware of the Frog."

Perception DC 14: The character spots a pair of giant frogs hidden in the mud near the monolith, their backs covered in bulbous fungal growths. More frogs lurk in the surrounding pools, watching the pixies through unblinking eyes.

The frogs heave themselves from the muck whenever prey comes close, using their snaky tongues to drag them into the mud pools. If one of their enemies is

knocked unconscious, the frogs might start fighting each other over the spoils. They stay in the vicinity of the standing stones throughout.

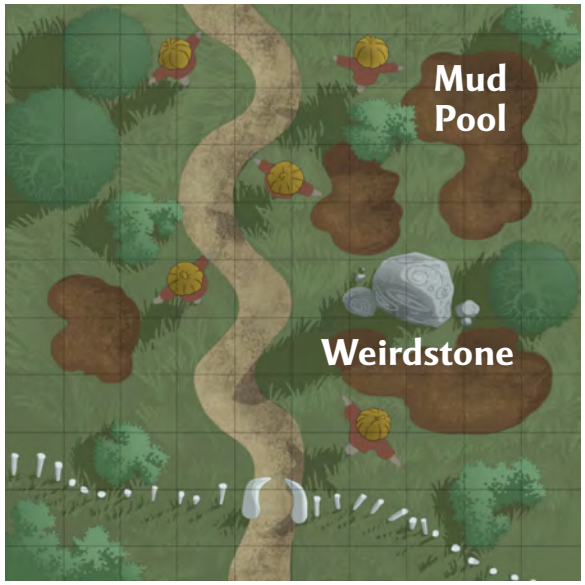
Mud Pools

Creatures entering a mud pool or starting their turn inside are slowed until the end of their next turn. Creatures with a swim speed are immune to this effect.

Screaming Scarecrows

The scarecrows are enchanted to start screaming if they spot strangers in the yard. They can't see farther than 4 squares, but it takes only one sighting for them all to start hollering. Pixies can sneak past the scarecrows by beating their passive Perception (DC 16).

Rotten Ethel hears the scarecrows even if she's out in the swamps. Once the alarm goes up, it takes only 1d4 + 1 rounds for her to reach here from the cottage, or 1d12 + 3 rounds from the swamps.



2 Sporeback Frogs	Level 2 Controller
Medium natural beast (aquatic)	XP 125 each
HP 42; **Bloodied** 21	**Initiative** +4
AC 16, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12	**Perception** +3
Speed 3, swim 5	Low-light vision
Traits	
Aquatic	
The sporeback can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against non-aquatic creatures.	
Standard Actions	
Bite ✦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the sporeback's next turn.	
Barbed Tongue ✦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +5 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d6 + 2 damage, and the sporeback pulls the target 2 squares and knocks it prone.	
Triggered Actions	
Spore Release (poison) **✦ Encounter**	
Trigger: The sporeback drops to 0 hit points.	
Attack (No Action): Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +5 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 1d6 + 7 poison damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).	
Skills Stealth +9	
Str 15 (+3) **Dex** 16 (+4) **Wis** 15 (+3)	
Con 18 (+5) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 9 (+0)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

The Weirdstone

This is one of three weirdstones used to channel the Murkendraw. The pixies can reverse the enchantment using the Call the Weird ritual found in the hag's study (location 11).

8. Hag's Cottage

Exploration Encounter

Ethel's cottage has many ways inside, but not all are readily apparent. Trespassers poking about the roof should beware the rabid rats lurking in the thatch.

3 Thornskin Frogs	Level 1 Brute
Medium natural beast (aquatic)	XP 100 each
HP 35; **Bloodied** 17	**Initiative** +4
AC 13, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 11	**Perception** +2
Speed 4, swim 6	Low-light vision
Traits	
Aquatic	
The thornskin can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against non-aquatic creatures.	
Standard Actions	
Bite ✦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 6 damage.	
Pounce ✦ Recharge ⚄ ⚅	
Effect: The thornskin shifts its speed and makes the following attack.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage, and the target falls prone.	
Minor Actions	
Tongue Grab ✦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The thornskin pulls the target 2 squares.	
Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+2)	
Con 15 (+2) **Int** 3 (-4) **Cha** 9 (-1)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

When the heroes get close to the cottage, read:

Ethel's cottage squats above the lake, a golden light glowing from its one high window. A massive dredge net churns the water beneath, its tow line slung to a grinding gear that shakes the cottage as it turns. The front door stands at the head of an uneven flight of steps, hidden behind a ramshackle porch that winds around the building to a lonely back door. Heaped beside the steps is a pile of junk crawling with rats and centipedes.

The cottage roof is infested with filth rats, which burst from the thatch to snap at anything touching its surface. Crazed by filth fever, they hiss and spit nonsensically if the pixies try to converse. Roll 1d6 + 3 to determine how many rats are encountered.

Use the rats whenever the characters go near the roof or venture beneath the porch. The rats can also

bother pixies moving about inside the cottage, but they dash for cover whenever the hag is about. Pixies bitten by filth rats could contract filth fever.

Filth Rat	**Level 1 Minion Brute**
Tiny natural beast	XP 25
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +2	
AC 13, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 11, **Will** 9	**Perception** +0
Speed 6, climb 3	Darkvision
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ **Bite** (disease) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 5 damage. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts slight filth fever (stage 1).	
Skills Stealth +7	
Str 4 (-3) **Dex** 15 (+2) **Wis** 10 (+0)	
Con 18 (+4) **Int** 2 (-4) **Cha** 3 (-4)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

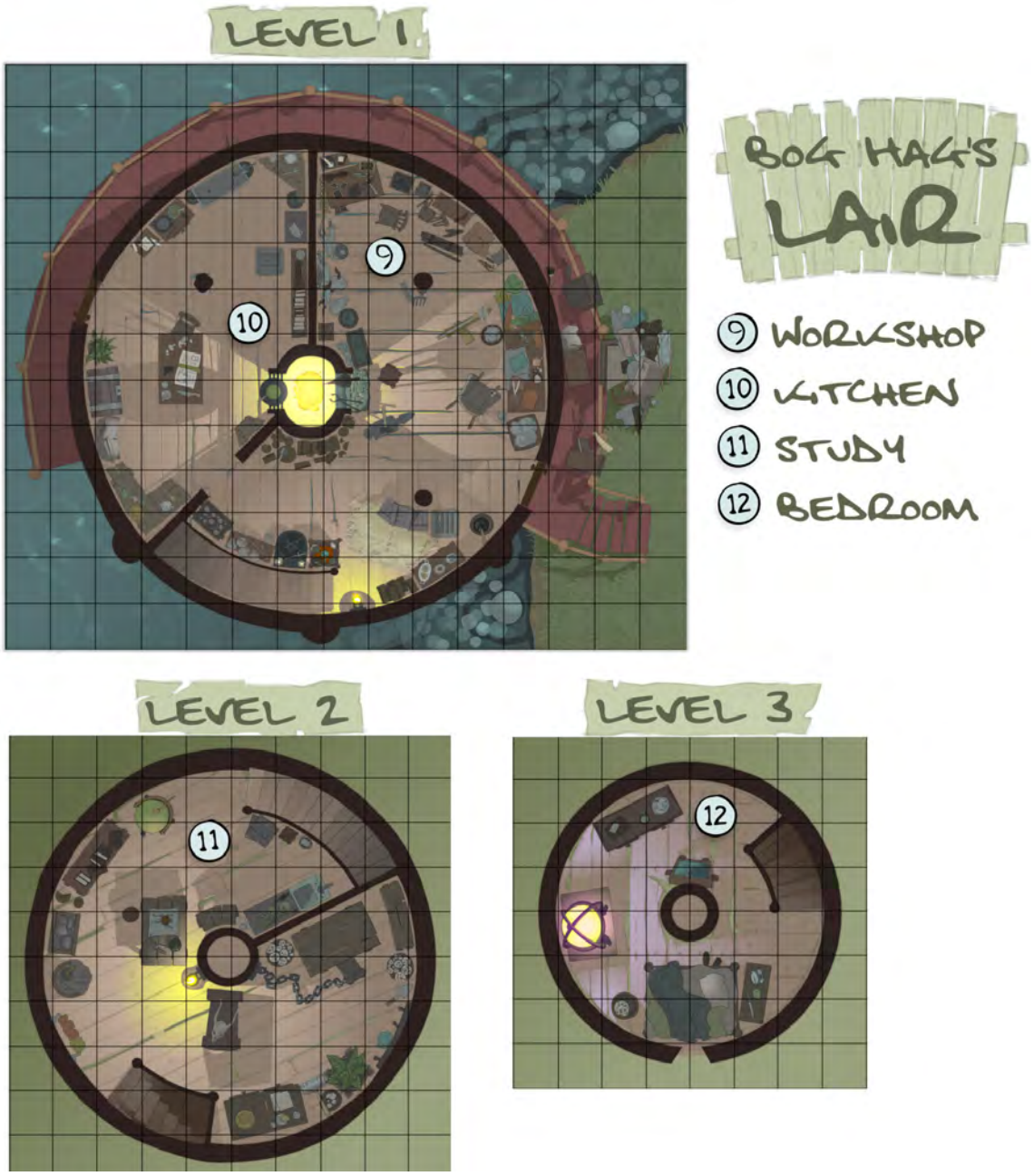
Slight Filth Fever	**Level 1 Disease**
Those infected by this disease waste away as they alternatively suffer chills and hot flashes.	

Stage 0: The target recovers from the disease.
Stage 1: While affected by stage 1, the target loses a healing surge.
Stage 2: While affected by stage 2, the target loses a healing surge and takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude, and Reflex.
Stage 3: While affected by stage 3, the target loses all healing surges and cannot regain hit points. The target also takes a -2 penalty to AC, Fortitude, and Reflex.
Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes an Endurance check if it is at stage 1 or 2.
7 or Lower: The stage of the disease increases by 1.
8-11: No change.
12 or Higher: The stage of the disease decreases by 1.

Getting Inside

The characters can enter the cottage using any of the following access points.

Bedroom Window: The bedroom window is 35 feet high, meaning it can be reached in just a single turn of flight. Anyone peering through the distorted



glass sees Glitterdust desperately fluttering about inside her jar. The window is locked, and pixies prying the latch (Thievery DC 9) are exposed to attacks from the rats.

Chimney: The chimney is 45 feet above ground level. It connects to the workshop and kitchen. Pixies flying down the chimney must pass a DC 12 Endurance check or start choking on the smoke, dazing them (save ends) and alerting the hag to their presence if she's nearby. The hearths are stoked day and night, dealing 1d8 + 4 fire damage to any pixies passing through (Acrobatics DC 14 to avoid damage).

Drains: Peering underneath the cottage reveals two rusted grates in the floor, just big enough for tiny-sized creatures to squeeze through. These drains lead into the workshop and kitchen.

Junk Pile: The otters regularly ferry salvage to this pile, which Ethel then scours for valuables to move inside to her workshop. Many objects are big enough for pixies to hide inside, including dented kettles and frayed wicker baskets. Pixies stowing away inside must pass a Stealth check to hide from the hag when she comes out (passive Perception score of 16).

Porch: The porch is precariously sprung and creaks loudly underfoot. Medium creatures must make a successful DC 9 Acrobatics check or crash through the rotten floorboards into the muck below. Ethel knows which boards to avoid, but she could make an accidental misstep if she's in a hurry.

Both doors leading inside are locked and latched (Thievery DC 13 to pick). Their hinges creak loudly when opened, alerting the hag to the presence of intruders unless they're oiled beforehand.

Inside the Cottage

The hag's cottage has plenty of places for pixies to hide. Unfortunately for them, each room is also full of danger.

Despite the clanking gear underneath, sound travels fast throughout the cottage. If they're home, Ethel and her familiar are immediately alerted to any combat breaking out inside.

Common Features

The following features show up in multiple places throughout the cottage.

Floor Drains

These rusted drains are the source of Ethel's rat problem. Tiny creatures can squeeze through the grates to gain access to the underside of the cottage.

Fireplace

The fireplace connects the workshop and the kitchen, with separate hearths opening into each. Creatures entering the fireplace or starting their turn inside take 1d8 + 4 fire damage plus ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). This damage can affect a creature only once per turn. Pixies who succeed on a DC 14 Acrobatics check can dart from one side to the other without getting burned.

Gaps in the Floorboards

The cottage's misshapen floorboards have many gaps between, some of which are large enough for a pixie to squeeze through. The pixies can also peer between the boards.

9. Workshop

Combat Encounter Level 1 (525 XP)

This workshop is where Ethel repairs her salvage. Ferocious constructs rise from the junk if anyone tampers with her haul.

Light: Bright light from the forge.

Monsters: 1 dressmaker's dummy, 1 suit of armor, 8 toy soldiers.

When the characters first enter this room, read:
This jumbled workshop is crammed to the rafters with broken junk. A blazing forge nestles in the back wall beside a rack of tools, weapons, and armor. Radiating around it are a needlework bench and spinning wheel, a rocking chair, and a carpentry bench covered in sawdust. Rotten steps rise to an upper floor, and a misshapen door leads off to another room.

The constructs animate if the pixies touch any of Ethel's salvage. They appear as a child-sized dressmaker's dummy in a grubby bridesmaid's gown, a suit of clanking plate armor, and a set of tin soldiers. The constructs pursue fleeing characters through the cottage but won't follow them outside.

Treasure

Searching through the junk unearths a number of treasures: a beautifully crafted weather vane of elaborate eladrin design (45 gp), a set of silver scales (20 gp), a crystal wind chime (30 gp), a pincushion shaped like a toad with jeweled pins (40 gp), and an ornate black iron mangle set with moonstones (45 gp). In addition, a level 3 magic item lies on top of one of the workbenches. Together, these comprise treasure parcels 3, 7, and 9.

Ethel's music box is kept here on a high shelf, releasing a babble of animal barks when opened. The pixies can identify the otters' voices with a DC 9 Nature check, but can't communicate with them; they

Dressmaker's Dummy	**Level 4 Controller**
Medium natural animate (construct)	XP 175
HP 50; **Bloodied** 25	**Initiative** +6
AC 18, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16	**Perception** +5
Speed 6	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Vulnerable** 5 fire	
Traits	
☼ **Creaking Dance ✦ Aura** 3	
Any construct ally that starts its turn in the aura can shift 1 square as a free action.	
Lead the Dance	
If the dummy moves, any creature grabbed by the dummy moves with it, staying grabbed in a space of the dummy's choice adjacent to the dummy.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Slam ✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d4 + 6 damage, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 14). The dummy can grab only one creature at a time.	
Minor Actions	
⇦ **Spin Your Partner ✦ Recharge** when the dummy starts its turn grabbing a creature	
Effect: The dummy releases the creature it is grabbing and pushes it up to 3 squares. At the end of this movement, the dummy makes the following attack.	
Attack: Close burst 1 centered on the pushed creature (creatures in the burst); +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d4 + 4 damage, and the target falls prone.	
Skills Acrobatics +11	
Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 16 (+5)	
Con 10 (+2) **Int** 2 (-2) **Cha** 1 (-3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

hear repeated calls of "Where am I?" and "What's happening?" Unwinding the music box releases the voices as motes of spectral light, which hover about worriedly until the box is rewound and the motes go back inside.

Suit of Armor	**Level 3 Soldier**
Medium natural animate (construct)	XP 150
HP 47; **Bloodied** 23	**Initiative** +5
AC 19, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13	**Perception** +6
Speed 5	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Slam ✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
⊕ **Backhand Slam ✦ At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the armor makes an attack that does not include the armor as a target.	
Effect: The armor uses *slam* against the triggering enemy.	
Str 16 (+4) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+1)	
Con 15 (+3) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 1 (-4)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

8 Toy Soldiers	**Level 1 Minion Soldier**
Tiny natural animate (construct)	XP 25 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +2	
AC 17, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13	**Perception** +5
Speed 4	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Slam ✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 3 damage, plus 1 damage for every ally adjacent to the soldier.	
Str 3 (-4) **Dex** 10 (+0) **Wis** 11 (+0)	
Con 11 (+0) **Int** 1 (-5) **Cha** 1 (-5)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

10. Kitchen

Combat Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

A page torn from Ethel's cookbook exposes yet another of her weaknesses, but the pixies must defeat more guardians to exploit it.

Light: Bright light from the fire.

Monsters: 5 animated objects (3 boathooks, 1 bellows, and 1 flower-pressing book).

Traps: 5 rat traps.

When the characters enter this room, read:

A bubbling iron cauldron straddles the hearth in this pigpen of a kitchen. Sagging shelves line the walls, laden down with dried herbs, stoppered potion bottles, and moldy vegetables. A weathered sea chest sits in the corner amid a pile of nets, and a giant recipe book is spread out over the kitchen table. Two doors exit from either side, one leading deeper into the cottage, the other heading back outside. The floor is scattered with vicious-looking rat traps.

Perception DC 12: The character spots a torn scrap of paper poking out from under the nets, one of five page fragments hidden in this room.

Five rat traps are placed about the kitchen.

The kitchen is protected by another of Ethel's enchantments, which causes various objects to spring to life when the characters touch the chest or tamper with the cauldron. These fight until destroyed, but they won't chase the pixies outside the kitchen.

Each animated object shares the same stat block but has its own unique attack.

5 Rat Traps	**Level 1 Minion Trap**
Object	XP 25 each
Detect automatic	**Initiative** –
HP 1	
AC 10, **Fortitude** 10, **Reflex** 5, **Will** –	
Immune all conditions, necrotic, poison, psychic, ongoing damage.	
Triggered Actions	
⸸ **Attack ✦ Encounter**	
Trigger: A creature enters the trap's square and fails a DC 8 Dexterity check.	
Attack (Opportunity): Melee 0 (the triggering creature); +4 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage. If the target is Tiny, it is also restrained and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends both).	
Countermeasures	
✦ **Disable:** Thievery DC 8 (standard action). *Success:* The trap is disabled.	

5 Animated Objects	Level 2 Skirmisher
Small natural animate (construct)	XP 125 each
HP 36; **Bloodied** 18	**Initiative** +6
AC 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 12	**Perception** +1
Speed 0, fly 6	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison, sleep	

Standard Actions

Slam ✦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 4 damage.
Effect: The object shifts up to 2 squares.

Str 14 (+3)	**Dex** 17 (+4)	**Wis** 11 (+1)
Con 12 (+2)	**Int** 2 (-3)	**Cha** 6 (-1)
Alignment unaligned	**Languages** –	

Boathooks: The boathooks stay close to the flower-pressing book and try to drag pixie characters between its snapping pages.

Standard Actions

Yank ✦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 4 damage, and the object slides the target up to 2 squares.

Bellows: The bellows try to blow pixie characters into the fire or push them down into the rat traps.

Standard Actions

Blast of Air ✦ At-Will

Attack: Close blast 3 (Tiny creatures in the blast); +5 vs. Fortitude
Hit: The object pushes the target up to 3 squares, and the target falls prone.

Flower-Pressing Book: The flower-pressing book flaps about in search of enemies to crush, its pages gummed with squashed pixies.

Standard Actions

Press ✦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 4 damage, and the object grabs the target (escape DC 13). The target takes ongoing 5 damage until the grab ends.

Cookbook

This molded cookbook is packed with recipes both mundane and magical. It once held instructions for brewing toadcackle—a medicinal draught that is anathema to hags—but Rotten Ethel tore up the page and scattered its pieces around the kitchen. Pixie characters who reassemble it can brew the potion using ingredients found on the shelves.

If the characters examine the cookbook, read: *One of the recipes has been roughly torn from the book, leaving just a ragged stump entitled "Toadcackle." Beneath this is a fragment of text: "This curative draught eases the pain of piles and buboes. Its vapors have the strangest effect on hags, who recoil from even the slightest"*

The characters can find each additional scrap by passing a DC 12 Perception check. They each bear different instructions and can be found in any order.

First scrap (under crate): *"sniff. To brew, first appease the cauldron spirit by spitting in the water."*

Second scrap (found among nets): *"Add the toe of a fire newt and mix well with bullywug jelly. Do not"*

Third scrap (under table): *"add spider eggs to thicken the brew until fully mixed."*

Fourth scrap (among shelves): *"Stir in five pairs of toad legs, but be sure to"*

Fifth scrap (caught in drain): *"season well with ground centipede before drinking."*

The potion must be brewed in the order above, with any mistakes causing the concoction to erupt in a poisonous cloud.

Triggered Actions

Poisonous Cloud (poison) **✦ At-Will**

Trigger: The potion ingredients are mixed out of order.
Attack: Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +5 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + 2 poison damage.
Miss: Half damage.

If they brew it correctly, the pixies can concoct 1d4 + 3 flasks of toadcackle.

Toadcackle Level 11 Uncommon

The fumes of this draught drive hags mad with pain and confusion.

Alchemical Item: Volatile 350 gp

Attack Power (Poison) **✦ Consumable** (Standard Action)

Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (hags in the burst); +14 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d6 poison damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The target is slowed and gains vulnerable 10 to all damage (save ends).

Treasure

The treasure chest is locked (Thievery DC 19 to open). It contains a level 4 magic item and 80 gp. Pixies searching the shelves also find a mortar and pestle made of onyx (15 gp), and a bag of bulbs and seeds from rare Feywild plants (25 gp of nature ritual components). Together, these account for treasure parcels 2 and 8.

11. Study

Combat Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

Brandel's girlfriend is kept here under the watchful eye of Curdlemilk, Rotten Ethel's viper familiar. Knowing that death awaits her once her duties are complete, Luella plays a clever game of procrastination to prolong her time in the world.

Light: Dim light from the candles.

Monsters: Curdlemilk (albino viper familiar). Luella has been tasked with writing letters to Ethel's sisters in the Murkendraw, offering stakes in the hag's new domain. If the pixies have quietly infiltrated the cottage, Luella is transcribing Curdlemilk's dictation when they arrive.

If the characters sneak up to this room, read:
Muffled conversation drifts from the room ahead. Two voices are talking in Common—a woman and a creature that speaks in a sibilant whisper.

"Should a sorceress really be addressed like that?" asks the woman.

The reply comes with a note of frustration. "What's wrong this time?"

"Well, it's probably nothing. It's just that 'dear Jen' sounds so . . . common. Shouldn't it at least be 'your ladyship'?"

The hissing creature pauses over this for a moment. "You're right, damn you. Start over, and be quick this time."

As Curdlemilk dictates, Luella craftily quibbles over the details, dragging out the task as best she can. Their conversation continues in this vein for as long as the pixies hang around to listen.

When the characters enter the room, read:
You emerge into a gloomy study lit by low-burning candles. Hundreds of oddities clutter the shelves, confounding you with pickled imps, painted animal skulls, petrified alligator eggs, and dissected fish. Moist pitcher plants lurk in the shadows, and malodorous vapors thicken the air from a bubbling alchemy lab. Two sets of stairs encircle the room, providing access to floors above and below.

A young woman in inky rags sits before a writing desk in the corner, her legs shackled to a hook on the wall. Dozens of dead pixies are pinned to a corkboard behind her, their faces locked in horrified expressions of surprise and fear.

Curdlemilk's casket sits on the desk next to Luella, the ruby eyes on its surface allowing him to see everything going on around it. The viper rarely leaves the casket, but he keeps the lid open while dictating.

With so few creatures to talk to, Curdlemilk delights in toying with his prey before combat, while his vainglorious nature makes him easy to trick through flattery. He also harbors a mutinous streak toward Ethel and could even be persuaded to betray her if the price was right. Of course, as a creature of pure evil, Curdlemilk is just as likely to turn on the pixies when they're least prepared.

Curdlemilk tries to flee if he is reduced to 50 hit points or fewer, slithering between the floorboards and then sliding down the drain into the lake. Too proud to admit failure to his mistress, he'll creep back to exact revenge once his wounds have healed.

Table of Combustibles

A character can overturn the table of combustibles with a standard action and a successful DC 19 Athletics check. In addition, the character can fall prone as part of the standard action to avoid the attack.

Standard Actions
Table of Combustibles (fire, poison)
Effect: Make the following two attacks.
Attack 1: Close burst 2 centered on the table (creatures in the burst); +4 vs. Fortitude
Hit: Ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).
Attack 2: Close burst 2 centered on the table (creatures in the burst); +4 vs. Reflex
Hit: Ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Luella

The keys to Luella's manacles hang on the wall nearby. She is eager to escape the hag's lair but could be persuaded to stick around if her rescuers present a compelling case. Sharp as a tack, Luella is more than capable of luring Rotten Ethel into the pixie's traps or tricking her into leaving the cottage. A day of writing her letters has also given her a decent idea of the bog hag's plans, so she is well aware of what's at stake.

Luella has 1 hit point, defenses 10, and no effective attacks. Assume her ability scores are 10 (+0 modifier) and her speed is 6 squares.

Curdlemilk **Level 3 Solo Skirmisher**
Tiny immortal beast (familiar, reptile) XP 750
HP 180; **Bloodied** 90 **Initiative** +5
AC 18, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16 **Perception** +7
Speed 6, swim 6 Low-light vision
Saving Throws +5; **Action Points** 2

Traits
Snap Out of It
If Curdlemilk is ever unable to use *slithering attack* due to being dominated, immobilized, restrained, slowed, or stunned, then the effect imposing the condition ends instead of Curdlemilk using *slithering attack*.

Standard Actions
Bite (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).
Hypnosis (charm, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Ranged 5 (one or two creatures); +6 vs. Will
Hit: The target is dominated (save ends).

Triggered Actions
Tail Slap ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to Curdlemilk misses him with an attack.
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Melee 1 (the triggering enemy); +8 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 3 damage, and Curdlemilk slides the target up to 3 squares.
Slithering Attack ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy is within 3 squares of Curdlemilk when he starts his turn, or an enemy ends its turn within 3 squares of Curdlemilk.
Effect (Free Action): Curdlemilk shifts up to half its speed and uses *bite* against the triggering enemy.

Skills Arcana +9, Bluff +9
Str 12 (+2) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+2)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 17 (+4) **Cha** 16 (+4)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Supernal

Treasure

Most of the oddities here are worthless to anyone but the most esoteric collector. Still, pixies searching the shelves can uncover some valuables. Two magic items are hidden in the clutter (level 2 and level 5), alongside a cobweb fan of delicate black silk (30 gp), a

potion of healing, a set of gold false teeth (40 gp), a set of three druidic jade masks (10 gp each), an ivory eyeball with a ruby iris (15 gp), and a collection of golden bird claw clasps (15 gp).

In addition, pixies searching Curdlemilk's casket uncover the Calling the Weird ritual that Ethel uses to empower her weirdstones. If this ritual is reversed outside each location—a process taking 10 standard actions—the stones can be disabled. Once all three stones are disabled, the Murkendraw starts to fade back into the Feywild.

HAPPILY EVER AFTER?

Luella wouldn't have refused Brandel's marriage proposal without reason. Maybe she has a secret fondness for another suitor, or she doubted Brandel's commitment. If so, Brandel's arrival here could be all she needs to know she made the wrong decision.

Of course, things could be more complicated. Perhaps Brandel and Luella never even dated, and he simply misinterpreted her signals. This makes his arrival somewhat embarrassing, and with love unrequited, he could even turn to the pixies for help in winning her heart.

Whatever the situation, Brandel does everything in his power to protect Luella until they've escaped the swamp. After all, he still has a lifetime to win her over.

12. Bedroom

Exploration Encounter and Trap/Hazard Encounter (100 XP)

Glitterdust is imprisoned at the foot of Ethel's bed, watched over by the mysterious thing in the mirror. The only way to free her is to steal the key from around the hag's neck.

When the characters enter this room, read:
The hag's bedroom is lit by waves of light from a domed bell jar. Inside is the most beautiful pixie you've ever seen, her gossamer wings shining with golden radiance. As you watch, a spinning candle chases her endlessly around her prison, preventing her from ever standing still.

The rest of the room glistens with damp. A lice-ridden bed lurks beneath the window, half-buried under a pile of refuse. Rotten clothes spill from a nearby cupboard, and a set of lopsided stairs wind down to the floor beneath. The bell jar stands on a bedside table, opposite a long mirror smeared with fingerprints.

Glitterdust has been trapped inside the jar since the day she was caught. The hag sets the candle to spin for three-quarters of every hour, with a few hours' respite at night. As Glitterdust flutters about, the magical powder coating her wings brushes off onto the glass, forming a layer of glittering residue. Ethel scrapes this off every morning with a spoon and uses it to empower the weirdstones.

Talking to Glitterdust

Glitterdust waves frantically for help when she sees the pixies, encouraging them to stop the candle and then telling them everything she knows about the hag. Rather than risk a potentially deadly confrontation, she suggests they find a way to steal the key.

Glitterdust tells the pixies all about Ethel's daily habits. She knows the bats work as her spies, and although she has overheard snippets of conversation

between Curdlemilk and Luella, she hasn't yet figured out who they are. She is currently unaware of the thing in the mirror, though she has seen the hag pause before it as though listening to something.

The Bell Jar

Glitterdust's prison is made from magically toughened glass, and it can be unscrewed from its wooden base only after the clamps are unlocked. A character can pick the lock with a DC 30 Thievery check, but the mechanism is trapped to electrify anybody tampering it, dealing 1d6 + 8 lightning damage if the check is failed by 5 or more.

Simply twisting the knob at the bell jar's base causes the candle to speed up or slow down to a halt. Glitterdust knows the candle is controlled from below, but she can't see how the knob is manipulated.

The Thing in the Mirror

Something horrible haunts the mirror. Adventurers looking inside see a stick-thin form hovering behind the bed, which silently glides forward to whisper in their ears. Those who listen are driven mad by fear and slowly fade away from sight.

The thing relays its sightings to Rotten Ethel whenever she visits. If the pixies discuss what to do within sight of the mirror, they might find their plans swiftly foiled by the hag.

The Thing in the Mirror	**Level 1 Trap**
Object	XP 100
Detect Arcana or Perception DC 9	**Initiative** –
HP 1	
AC 10, **Fortitude** 10, **Reflex** 5, **Will** –	
Immune all conditions, necrotic, ongoing damage, poison, psychic	
Triggered Actions	
ǂ **Dread Whisper** ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: A creature adjacent to the mirror looks into it.	
Attack (Free Action): Melee 1 (triggering creature); +4 vs. Will	
Hit: The target is stunned (save ends).	
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is removed from play until the mirror drops to 0 hit points, at which point the target appears in a random unoccupied square adjacent to the mirror.	

Concluding the Adventure

With Glitterdust safe and the weirdstones disabled, the pixies can return safely to King Sunfire's court. As they head back through the swamps, they see the Murkendraw churning back into the Feywild. Old trees rise up from the enshrouding mud, which washes away with the next rain shower.

Of course, Ethel might still live. If so, King Sunfire bides his time until he has a force capable of taking her out. Perhaps his strike team will need leaders?

About the Author

Will Doyle is a designer with Supermassive Games in the United Kingdom, and he has previously published articles for both *Dungeon* and *Kobold Quarterly* magazines. He would like to thank Oban, Inkwing, Ash, and Flo Moonsung for making this adventure happen. Will and his girlfriend Stacey run a D&D blog at http://beholderpie.blogspot.co.uk

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Fall of the Gray Veil

A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 2–4

By Christopher Perkins

Illustrations by Eric Belisle, Jason A. Engle, and Phill Simmer

Cartography by Mike Schley

The village of Baron's Hill and its environs have turned shades of gray. All the color has leached from the land and its people. The houses and cottages are gray. The trees are gray. The autumn leaves are gray. So are the cats, the dogs, the cows, the cornfields and the scarecrows that protect them, the wagons and the horses that pull them, and all else within a one-mile radius of the Baron's Hill cemetery. The cemetery's tombstones are gray too—but then, they always have been.

"Fall of the Gray Veil" takes place during the autumn season because it suits the intended mood and ties into the adventure's underlying themes of death and decay. The adventure plays equally well in winter, spring, or summer—although, admittedly, the title loses its double meaning in other seasons.

The Gray Veil

The fact that their world has turned to gray is disconcerting to the residents of Baron's Hill, but apart from frayed nerves, the so-called "gray veil" has had no harmful effects as far as anyone can tell. Still, many concerned villagers are inclined to pack up their belongings and leave, afraid that the disappearance of color is a harbinger of more terrible things to come.

The adventurers happen to be staying in the village of Baron's Hill or passing close by when they notice that all the colors have mysteriously faded away. Within the range of the effect, the characters appear in shades of gray like everyone else, but they're the only ones in the village capable of solving the mystery, dispelling the gray veil, and returning color to the area.

Creatures within the gray veil have no sense of how far it extends until they reach the outer edge of the expanse, where a hint of color becomes visible. The colors gradually return to normal as one advances beyond the soft edge of the unnatural grayscape. Clever characters who circumnavigate the gray expanse can ascertain that the Baron's Hill cemetery rests "dead center" in the middle of the gray veil. Investigation of the hilltop graveyard reveals that it is haunted. As the characters search the cemetery for clues, they sense the presence of an invisible ghost—the vestige of a young boy named Fin who was trampled to death by a horse three years ago.

The adventurers can confirm that Fin's unrest is the source of the "curse" that has befallen Baron's Hill and the surrounding land. Further investigation reveals that the child was blind from birth and had never known red, purple, green, blue, or any other color. The gray veil is a manifestation of how Fin imagines the world around him.

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Fin's Unrest

To lift the gray veil, the characters must determine the cause of Fin's unrest. Exploration of the cemetery reveals no recent burials or upheavals. But communing with Fin's spirit reveals that someone has plundered his remains, and indeed, characters who dig up the graves discover that most of them are empty. The theft of bones from the cemetery points to a shadow from the village's past—a strange necromancer named Talther Yorn.

An adventuring companion of the late Baron Davian Ryckhar (for whom Baron's Hill was named), Talther Yorn built a tower on the outskirts of the village. Though he mostly kept to himself, he did hire some cheap mercenaries and put them to work as grave robbers to support his necromantic research. At first, the old barrows and battlegrounds that were common to the region provided Yorn with plenty of skeletal remains for his experiments. But as his hirelings stripped these tombs and fields one by one, the villagers grew increasingly concerned about Yorn's activities. Finally, Baron Ryckhar worked up the courage to ask his former comrade-in-arms to leave and take his "research" with him. Yorn abandoned his tower, and as the years passed, rumors grew that it was haunted. At present, the tower is nothing more than a rotted-out shell infested with vermin.

Baron Ryckhar went off to fight in a war and never returned, leaving behind an empty estate and no family. His will bequeathed his money and holdings to the villagers of Baron's Hill, who used some of the coin to raise a statue in Ryckhar's honor. No living soul in the village knew (or cared, for that matter) what had happened to Talther Yorn.

One of the grave robbers who worked for Yorn was a man named Grygori Dilvia, who took to living in the hills after Yorn's departure. Grygori still keeps to himself and inhabits an old cave north of the village. He is something of a bogeyman to the local children, who occasionally see him fishing with his hands by the creek or skulking around his forlorn homestead. Distressed locals urge the adventurers to confront Grygori and determine whether he or Yorn is responsible for the theft of bones from the Baron's Hill cemetery, and whether the two of them have anything to do with Fin's unrest. If the adventurers investigate Grygori Dilvia, they discover that he is a ghast.

When he is confronted in his lair, Grygori claims to have all but forgotten Talther Yorn, but the adventurers can verify that he is lying. Grygori knows that Yorn never really left as he was asked to. Rather, with the help of Grygori and others, the necromancer has spent the past several years expanding an old tomb and carving out a new home beneath the hills. Hoping to erase an old injury, the necromancer became a vampire, and he has continued to conduct his evil experiments within his secure underground sanctuary to this day. The characters can either follow Grygori to Yorn's new lair or force the ghastly grave robber to take them there. Either way, they're in for a fight when they show up on Yorn's doorstep.

A Grave Matter

Talther Yorn instructed Grygori to steal bones from the Baron's Hill cemetery on moonless nights over the course of several months. The necromancer has been grinding the bones to a fine powder, which he combines with other ingredients to create a necrotic admixture that transforms living creatures into undead horrors. He has been testing this foul concoction on assorted animals, a few wayward travelers, and a mob of goblin underlings.

Determined to keep his activities and continued presence hidden from the local villagers, Yorn conceived a way to remove bones from the local cemetery without digging up the graves. He furnished Grygori with *potions of spectral form*, which allowed the ghast to phase through solid ground, remove the bones from their coffins, and return to the surface, leaving the grave dirt undisturbed. Characters might unearth one of these potions in Grygori's cave.

To lay Fin's spirit to rest and lift the gray veil, the adventurers must search Talther Yorn's dungeon lair and retrieve the dead child's earthly remains. By studying the necromancer's research notes, they discover that Yorn has already reduced Fin's bones to powder to create his horrid concoction, which he has administered to one of his goblin underlings. Once they have dealt with Yorn, the characters must capture or kill the elusive undead goblin before it escapes, return with it to the cemetery, and place it in Fin's grave.

If Yorn captures the characters, he injects them with his necrotic concoction. At that point, they're as good as undead.

Using This Adventure

The village of Baron's Hill fits easily into any corner of your campaign world. If you're running an Eberron® campaign, consider placing the village near a manifest zone to Mabar, the Endless Night. If you're running a Forgotten Realms® campaign, the lair of the main villain works well as an abandoned temple of Shar. If you're running a campaign in the Nentir Vale, consider placing Baron's Hill on the western edge of Gardbury Downs, south of Winterhaven, or near the Old Hills east of Thunderspire, just off the King's Road, or on the eastern road between Hammerfast and Harkenwold, near the foothills of the Dawnforge Mountains.

Beginning the Adventure

Baron's Hill lies about a mile north of a major trade road that runs west to east between two larger settlements that are several days apart on foot. The village is a common waypoint for weary travelers seeking cozy beds after long days of travel.

Some other quest might bring the adventurers to Baron's Hill. In the fields around the village are many ancient barrows that house the remains of fallen soldiers and kings—as well as their possessions. The characters might come here on a quest to find an item hidden in one of these burial mounds. Alternatively, they might have heard rumors of a lost dungeon in the hills nearby, or they might have been hired by wealthy landowners to track down a roving group of brigands that has been threatening the trade road of late.

If none of these hooks suits your campaign, the adventurers might be following the trade road to some other destination when they decide to rest for the night, or perhaps they see the gray veil over Baron's Hill as they pass by and decide to investigate.

If the characters start in the village, read:

You have stopped for the night in a sleepy village nestled among the hills north of the trade road. But after a restful sleep in a cozy bed at the village's small inn, you awake to find something horribly amiss. All the color in your room is gone, replaced with tones of gray. Even your gear has turned gray.

A quick glance out the window reveals that the world outside has turned gray as well, as though some thief had come slinking into the village in the dead of night and robbed the place of color. A few villagers stand outside, their puzzled faces and disheveled nightclothes as gray as ash. Worse still, reflected in the window glass is your own gray phantom image. It seems that whatever curse has befallen the village has snared you as well.

If the characters are in Baron's Hill when the gray veil sets in, they witness its effect on the villagers. At first, widespread panic and confusion reign supreme. Then, as the morning wears on and no immediate threat appears, the villagers begin to discuss what has happened. In relatively short order, they reach the conclusion that a curse has befallen them. By mid-afternoon, the local priest calls a meeting in the baron's estate (area B), during which a schism forms between those who think it best to flee and those who want to stay and find the cause of the "gray veil" that has fallen upon Baron's Hill. If the characters are present, the villagers ask them to put their talents to work. If the characters refuse to help, many of the villagers voice suspicions that the party is somehow responsible for bringing this "curse" to the village.

If the characters are traveling along the trade road that runs south of the village, read:

You've been following the trade road for days now, swapping news with other weary travelers, but today, the traffic has died down. The lonely stretch of road weaves gently through a sea of grassy hills that all seem the same. Then, as you round a wide curve, an odd sight appears ahead. Nestled among the hills north of the road is a scattering of cottages, farms, and trees cast in haunting shades of gray. A large gray house on a distant, gray hill overlooks the village. This bleak zone seems to stretch for miles, engulfing nearby forests and hills. Near the discernible edge stands a gray mill next to a gray creek, and a grim, gray field of burial mounds that crouch, half hidden, in the tall gray grass.

Whatever curse has befallen this place stops short of engulfing the trade road. At the spot where the village road meets the main road stands a wooden post with a sign pointing toward the village. Gold lettering on the sign identifies the place as BARON'S HILL. Asleep at the foot of the signpost is a female dwarf dressed like a commoner.

The dwarf is Azure Hallowgrog, a villager chosen to stand watch by the trade road and flag down passersby who might be able to help solve the mystery of the gray veil and end the curse on Baron's Hill. Though she tried to stay awake and alert for as long as possible, Azure eventually dozed off. Her absent-minded younger brother, Jasper, was supposed to relieve her a few hours ago, but he forgot to do so.

If the characters wake the sleeping dwarf, Azure is glad to see them and tells them everything she knows about the "gray veil"—which isn't much except that it appeared suddenly and, so far, hasn't brought harm to anyone. You can decide how long ago the gray veil appeared, although it should've happened within the past couple days.

MAJOR QUEST: LIFT THE GRAY VEIL
3rd-Level Major Quest

To complete this quest, the characters must obtain what's left of Fin's remains from Talther Yorn (area H) and inter them in the village cemetery (area C). This action lays Fin's ghost to rest and lifts the gray veil from the town.

The characters must first determine that the cemetery lies at the center of the gray veil, and that the zone is a manifestation of Fin's unrest. The easiest way to accomplish the first task is to follow the edge of the zone (area E) and pinpoint the cemetery (area C) at the center of it. As for the second task, skill checks made in the cemetery hint at Fin's presence and permit the characters to commune with the boy's spirit.

Fin wants his bones returned, and his ghost will not rest until his remains are once again in their proper grave. When the characters visit his grave, though, it appears undisturbed. This puzzling fact might lead characters to realize that Fin's grave is not the only one that has been plundered and defiled.

At some point, the characters must bring their discoveries to the villagers of Baron's Hill, because only these local folk can lead the investigation toward

Grygori Dilvia, the hermit who used to rob graves for a living. From Grygori, they can learn what has happened to Fin's bones.

Hounds of Ill Omen

Combat Encounter Level 1 (300 XP)

Although many villagers think the gray veil is an ill omen, it is actually harmless. Nevertheless, those who believe that the gray veil portends the village's doom cannot be consoled, and many want to flee.

Fin, the dead blind boy whose ghost haunts the Baron's Hill cemetery (area C), cannot lift the gray veil until his spirit is laid to rest. Nothing is preventing the townsfolk (and the adventurers) from leaving the area, so they aren't necessarily trapped.

To increase the threat to Baron's Hill, you can have ghostly hounds of ill omen descend upon the village, drawn to the area by Fin's unrest. The spectral hounds prowl the edge of the gray veil (area E), hunting and attacking anyone who leaves. Among the first to face the hounds are Randal Puddle and Willow Goodriver, the halfling storekeepers (area A). As determined as they are to flee Baron's Hill, a harrowing encounter with a lone hound forces them to turn back and abandon any hope of departure.

Characters approaching the edge of the gray veil (area E) see one hound of ill omen watching them from afar. If they exit the gray veil and continue to head away from Baron's Hill, the hound charges and attacks them with its *bite* attack. If it's having trouble driving the characters back toward Baron's Hill, it can summon an additional 1d6 hounds by howling, which brings reinforcements in 1d4 + 1 rounds. The hounds of ill omen are much higher level than the characters; even so, they don't attack anyone who retreats back toward the village.

Once the characters re-inter Fin and lift the gray veil, the hounds of ill omen fade away.

Hound of Ill Omen **Level 7 Soldier**
Medium shadow beast (undead) XP 300

HP 80; **Bloodied** 40 **Initiative** +10
AC 23, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18 **Perception** +10
Speed 8; phasing Darkvision
Immune disease, poison

Traits

☼ **Ill Omen ✦ Aura** 2
Any enemy that spends a healing surge while in the aura is slowed until the end of its next turn.

Insubstantial
The hound takes half damage from any damage source, except those that deal force damage or radiant damage. In addition, if the hound takes radiant damage, it loses the insubstantial trait until the end of its next turn.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Bite ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage.
Effect: The target is marked until the end of the hound's next turn.

Howl of Doom (psychic, thunder) **✦ Encounter**
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +10 vs. Will
Hit: 2d10 + 11 thunder damage, and the target is cursed. Until the target is no longer cursed, it takes 3 psychic damage whenever it misses every target with an attack power. At the end of each extended rest the target takes, it makes a DC 16 Religion check to try to end the curse.
First Failed Check: The psychic damage increases to 6.
Second Failed Check: The psychic damage increases to 9.
Third Failed Check: The target dies.
Miss: Half damage.

Triggered Actions

Howl of the Pack (fear, thunder) **✦ At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy within 3 squares of the hound and marked by it willingly moves away from it.
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Close blast 3 (the triggering enemy in the blast); +10 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + 4 thunder damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn.

Str 16 (+6)	**Dex** 20 (+8)	**Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 16 (+6)	**Int** 4 (+0)	**Cha** 12 (+4)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

A. Village of Baron's Hill

Davian Ryckhar was of noble birth and a high-ranking soldier in the service of the king. When he had no more wars to fight, he took to adventuring. Eventually, the king made Ryckhar a baron and awarded him a sizable parcel of land, upon which he built a manor house. A community quickly sprang up around it, and thus the village of Baron's Hill was born.

Baron Ryckhar left the village to serve in one last campaign and never returned, and the village has been without a governing landowner since. The village vicar, Hector Yzardo, also serves as the resident priest, and whenever a matter of utmost importance comes to light, he dutifully gathers his fellow villagers in the baron's residence (area B) to discuss the issue. If only a vote can resolve the matter, every attending adult has a hand in the verdict, with Hector tallying and proclaiming the results. The villagers enjoy this form of self-government, although they pray for the health and welfare of their distant king.

The village's current population is roughly 250, mostly humans and halflings with a scattering of other races.

Most of the village proper is left for you to flesh out. Some noteworthy features and residents are briefly described below.

If the players need a descriptive overview of Baron's Hill, read:

Several grassy hills surround the peaceful village, whose predominantly wooden buildings have stone chimneys and clay roof tiles. A few older stone cottages with thatch roofs provide housing for smaller families and elderly folk.

A packed dirt road leads north into the village. The first building on the west side of the road is the stone mill, with its great wooden wheel sticking out over a winding creek that disappears into a nearby forest.

The next major structure along the road is the Dead Crow Inn, at the heart of the village. This two-story wooden building has posts out front for tying off horses, and nests of birds are tucked beneath its many gables and cornices. At the end of the road hunches a squat, narrow, wooden store, where residents can purchase all manner of common goods. Behind it, abutting a still pond, stands a wooden church with a tall steeple.

Two nearby hills overlook the village. A wagon trail winds up the western hill to the village cemetery, where several generations of the village's dead lie beneath gray tombstones. A similar trail climbs the eastern rise to a large house that looms quietly above all.

Locations that characters are likely to explore in Baron's Hill include the mill, the inn, the store, and the church. The former hilltop residence of Baron Ryckhar and the quiet village cemetery are described in areas B and C, respectively.

Rutledge Mill

The only remarkable aspect about the village mill is its proximity to the trade road. The miller, Olaf Rutledge, lives here with his wife, Amelia, and their four children (two sons and two daughters). They kindly point visitors seeking shelter to the Dead Crow Inn up the road. The Rutledges know they're close to the edge of the gray veil, but they have no explanation for the phenomenon. They are unwilling to leave the mill and have adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

Dead Crow Inn

The proprietor of the Dead Crow Inn is a half-orc ranger named Gargok. A retired adventurer, he named his establishment after his former adventuring band. The Dead Crows dissolved when they lost all but two members battling trolls in the hills some years ago. Gargok fondly remembers his adventuring

days and still keeps his swords above the barroom mantel, honed and ready.

The half-orc has a pronounced limp, courtesy of a troll that bit his leg, but he gets around with the aid of a birch walking stick. He's never without his black mastiff, Snarl, which faithfully and dutifully follows him around. Locals refer to the formidable yet surprisingly docile hound as "Gargok's shadow."

The other surviving member of the Dead Crows, a human wizard named Cassandra Talvin, blows through the village once or twice a year to check on Gargok and make sure business is good. Fortunately for Gargok, he has little to complain about these days: He recently married a much younger local girl named Dezlyn Rillsgar (a human), and they have a half-orc baby girl named Fiona, who spends much of her time with Dezlyn's parents and older sister in a cottage on the west side of the village. Even though he's a half-orc, Gargok has no enemies (no living ones, anyway), and the other villagers consider him a natural leader.

Gargok has no explanation for the gray veil and is probably the villager least distraught by its presence. As long as it does no obvious harm, he maintains a "business as usual" mentality, although it doesn't take an Insight check to glean that he's concerned about his family's safety.

Gargok's inn has guest rooms on the upper floor, with two beds to a room. A bed costs 5 cp per night, and a meal costs 1 sp. A flagon of ale costs 1 cp, or 5 cp for the "good stuff."

Puddle's Goods

Passing caravans resupply the village store every month, but the store also sells local goods, including bread, flour, corn, apples, berries, pumpkins, turnips, radishes, and homemade items such as baskets, sacks, shoes, and hemp rope. The store offers little in the way of adventuring gear, but the proprietors—an unmarried halfling couple named Randal Puddle and Willow Goodriver—have a pony and wagon that they use to fetch supplies on occasion. Randal doesn't mind making a special trip to procure something his store doesn't normally carry; he sells such "specialty items" for double the normal price. Willow also makes apple, berry, and pumpkin pies, which she sells for 4 sp each (or 5 cp by the slice).

Randal and Willow are deeply concerned about the gray veil. They are willing to hear what other respectable villagers have to say, but they immediately began packing up their wagon in preparation for departure as soon as the phenomenon arose. (Randal says they have friends in other settlements who will take them in until "things blow over.") Other villagers who depend on the store have urged the halflings to stay, but their minds are made up. The only thing that keeps them from leaving immediately is Randal's determination to cram as many of their belongings into the wagon as possible.

Village Church

Father Hector Yzardo, the portly, middle-aged village priest, is also the appointed vicar of Baron's Hill—a role he takes seriously. His church is a well-maintained wooden structure that backs onto a pond, which is home to hundreds of frogs. Their incessant croaking keeps Hector awake at night and drives him "to the brink of madness," or so he is fond of saying. Gargok has offered the priest a room at the inn, but Hector has repeatedly declined the half-orc's generous offer. Neighbors who've witnessed the exchange suspect that Hector is terrified of Snarl, Gargok's hound—which is true. Hector is afraid of many things, in fact, including what he calls the "gray veil," which he thinks is an ill omen.

Hector's superiors in the clergy sent him to the village shortly after Baron Ryckhar left. He replaced the previous priest, Father Emil Letharen, who died in his sleep one winter after a long illness. Hector also took up the mantle of vicar when Gargok politely declined to assume the role. Hector means well, but he's indecisive and can't make any decision without first reaching some sort of consensus with others. He naturally defers to anyone who carries even the faintest whiff of authority. He has no insights into the cause of the gray veil, which plainly worries him. If he could flee without embarrassing himself, he would. If the characters seem at all interested in getting to the bottom of the mystery, Hector applauds their efforts and does whatever he can to assist, short of putting himself in harm's way.

Hector's church is dedicated to whichever god best serves your campaign, and iconography appropriate to that faith adorns the interior. Hector was an apothecary's apprentice in his younger years, and although he never excelled at the profession, he has brewed a handful of minor healing potions, which he offers free of charge to any character brave enough to imbibe one. If a character drinks one of Hector's potions, roll 1d6 to determine the result: 1–2, the character regains 1d6 hit points but is weakened until he or she takes an extended rest; 3–4, no effect; 5–6, the character regains 1d6 hit points.

At your discretion, Hector might have a religious ritual scroll or two tucked away in the church. He gladly provides these scrolls to the adventurers in times of need.

B. Baron's Hill Estate

Baron Davian Ryckhar's former residence is the oldest structure in the village, and the villagers now use it as a meeting hall. Servants once loyal to the baron have long since departed, but the locals do their best to keep the neglected house from caving in on itself.

Read:
Situated atop a hill overlooking the village, this lonely gray house affords a commanding view of the surrounding countryside. The gray roof sags and creaks, and many of the windows are hidden behind gray shutters, several of which are falling loose or missing slats. Crows seem to like the place quite a lot, as evidenced by the thistle and twig nests stuffed into the eaves and tucked into the corners of windowsills.

A dusty driveway circles around a twelve-foot-tall statue atop a listing stone pedestal in front of the old house. The statue depicts a noble fellow in the prime of his life, gazing toward the west with sword held close.

The villagers took some of the money left to them by Baron Ryckhar and paid a sculptor to carve the nobleman's handsome likeness into stone. The statue of Ryckhar is otherwise unremarkable.

The house is unoccupied, and most of the rooms are empty. The villagers have been using the old dining room as a meeting hall. The dining table has been pushed against one wall to make room for several rows of wooden chairs facing a plain wooden lectern.

Characters searching the rest of the house can hear rats in the walls and birds in the attic. Under the main staircase and in the back of the main pantry are staircases that descend to the dirt-floored cellar, which is shrouded in cobwebs and crawling with harmless vermin.

C. Cemetery

The characters can learn all they need to know about the gray veil here. The Baron's Hill cemetery, on the other hand, doesn't give up its secrets easily.

Read:
A four-foot-high iron-wrought fence surrounds this forlorn hilltop cemetery, where gray headstones mark scores of silent graves. The tombstones share a uniform design. A glance at the names and dates etched upon them reveals that several generations of deceased villagers lie buried under this hill. A faint chill pervades the area.

Nearly all the headstones are the work of a sarcastic but likeable dwarf stonemason named Argus Grimbold, who has lived in the village since its founding and who actually laid the foundation for Baron Ryckhar's estate (area B). Beyond their similarity in design, the tombstones are unremarkable. If the characters speak to Grimbold about his handiwork, he remarks that he altered his tombstone design only once—for the necromancer Talther Yorn, who paid extra to have a more distinctive tombstone carved for his dead apprentice, Kalara (see area D for details).

Fin's ghost cannot leave the cemetery, but it can sense the presence of living creatures within it. The ghost cannot manifest physically, but some characters can feel its presence, and it can communicate with anyone capable of sensing it. When the characters enter the cemetery grounds, the one with the highest passive Perception score automatically senses the ghost's unnatural presence. Clerics who worship gods of death or mages specialized in necromancy might also sense the ghost, at your discretion.

When a character senses the ghost, read:
You sense an unnatural presence haunting the hilltop. It seems to reach out to you, and suddenly you hear the voice of a child whispering in your mind. "Help me!" it cries.

Only the character (or characters) who can sense the ghost's presence can hear its whispered words. Fin cannot guide the characters to his grave, since he has no visual or spatial awareness. (He's just as blind in death as he was in life.) A tombstone near the cemetery's northern periphery bears the name FIN, and the dates inscribed upon it indicate that the child died at age nine about three years ago.

Characters who can sense the ghost can ask Fin questions, which he answers to the best of his ability:

Who are you? "Fin."
How did you die? "I don't know."
Are you from the village? "No."
Where are you from? "Far away."
Do you have family here? "No."
Where is your family? "Dead. Mother, father, sister . . . all dead."
What happened to your family? "They were killed by evil men."
Are you responsible for turning everything gray? "I don't know."
What do you want? "I want to rest."
Why are you not at rest? "My bones! Gone!"
Who took your remains? "I don't know."
Has anyone else visited the cemetery recently? "I don't think so."

Fin can sense only the living, and the gray veil is a manifestation of his unrest, not a deliberate attempt by the ghost to spread fear and panic.

After Fin's ghost has answered any questions put to it, a character can make a DC 13 Insight check to conclude that the gray veil is tied to his unrest (assuming that the players haven't made the connection already). A successful DC 13 Religion check confirms that the only way to lay this ghost to rest is to return the child's remains to its grave. Another Religion check at the same DC reveals that the boy's

spirit somehow got "lost" on the way to the afterlife and remains eternally bound to the cemetery.

Characters making inquiries in the village learn the following facts about Fin:

- Four years ago, a local farmer named Holgar Razlek found the boy stumbling through a field in the dead of winter, half frozen to death. Brigands had killed his parents and older sister, forcing the boy to flee his distant homestead. Holgar took the boy in, even though his wife and sons weren't thrilled with the idea.
- Fin lived with the Razleks for less than a year. One fateful evening, a horse trampled him to death while he was crossing the road in front of the family's cottage. The horse was pulling an ale wagon, and the dwarf merchant at the reins wasn't local. The merchant swore that he didn't see Fin dart in front of his horse and wagon until it was too late.
- The Razlek family still lives in Baron's Hill. At Fin's funeral, several villagers overheard Holgar's wife, Karla, calling the boy's untimely death "a relief."
- The authorities ruled Fin's death an accident because the boy was blind. It's commonly believed that he either stumbled blindly into the horse's path or underestimated the speed at which the horse was moving.

Close examination of Fin's grave reveals that the dirt has not been disturbed in years. In fact, none of the graves look recently disturbed.

Almost everyone in the village, with the exception of the half-orc innkeeper Gargok and the village priest Hector Yzardo, has family buried here. The villagers will be understandably perturbed if the characters exhume graves without Father Yzardo's permission. If the characters share what they've learned with the priest, they can easily convince him to let them unearth Fin's coffin.

The wood of Fin's child-sized coffin has rotted away, which gives the initial impression that someone or something smashed through it, but a DC 11 Nature check confirms that the damage is natural. The coffin contains nothing but dirt and wood splinters; Fin's burial garb and bones are indeed gone. This is troubling news to the villagers, including Fin's adoptive family, the Razleks.

As the characters exhume more graves, they discover more empty coffins. For each coffin exhumed, roll 1d6: on a result of 1–5, the coffin is empty, its contents looted. If the characters ask locals who might be plundering the cemetery, they get many fearful looks as well as the following information:

- An old tower nearby was once the residence of a shady human necromancer named Talther Yorn. He used to hire mercenaries to plunder bones from the old barrows and battlefields around here—for what purpose is anyone's guess.
- Yorn was an acquaintance of Baron Ryckhar's—some might say a friend, although it's odd that the baron would keep such dark company. Ten years ago, when villagers expressed concern about Yorn's desecration of old burial mounds, the two men had a falling out, and Ryckhar asked Yorn to leave, which he did without hesitation. The necromancer hasn't reared his ugly head since, and his tower remains abandoned to this day. Local children think it's haunted.
- One of the mercenaries in Yorn's employ stayed behind. His name is Grygori Dilvia, and he lives like a hermit just outside of Baron's Hill. He never wanders into the village, though his nearest neighbors occasionally glimpse him fishing with his hands in the creek near his cave. He's a creepy sod with a history of robbing graves. If anyone's to blame, it's him!

The characters can dispel any lingering doubts about who is responsible for the gray veil in one of two ways. First, the cemetery lies at the very center of the effect—a fact that the characters can ascertain by exploring its edge (area E). Second, they can speak to Holgar and Karla Razlek.

Karla was relieved when Fin died, because he was deeply troubled and required her undivided attention. She and Holgar also confess that Fin suffered from constant nightmares about the brigand attack that killed his family. His screams woke the household and frightened the other boys, and other members of the household would occasionally hear voices and sounds of the brigand attack as though it were happening in their home, suggesting that Fin had the power to project his psyche.

D. Yorn's Tower

Talther Yorn's former residence has a reputation for being haunted. For this reason, locals shun the tower.

Read:
Dead gray leaves swirl around the crumbling foundation of a dilapidated, three-story tower that appears at first glance to be nothing more than a hollow shell. An open doorway on the ground floor beckons, but the boarded-up windows warn all to stay away. The roof looks like a tattered witch's hat, with its torn-off shingles and gaping holes, but an iron lightning rod still crowns its apex.

Perception DC 9: *East of the tower, about thirty feet away, stands a gray headstone marking a lone grave. The carved shape of a raven crowns the top of the tombstone.*

The grave near the tower belongs to an evil protégé of Talther Yorn's who died in a botched necromantic experiment that also left her master disfigured. Engraved on the headstone is the name KALARA and nothing else. No coffin lies underneath the stone, but characters who dig down 6 feet discover a human skeleton wrapped in a rotted black shroud. These are Kalara's earthly remains. ("Kalara" is also the command word for Yorn's magic mirror in area H22.)

Spiders in the Spire

Combat Encounter Level 4 (900 XP)

Anyone who explores the tower quickly discovers that it has become infested with monstrous spiders.

Monsters: 6 ambush spiders, 1 spider swarm.

If the characters peer inside the tower, read:
Here and there within the tower's stony husk stand massive heaps of detritus, including collapsed wooden staircases and broken furnishings. The wooden floor between the first and second levels has rotted away, leaving a jagged hole, and the visible portion of the second floor is thick with cobwebs.

Perception DC 19: *A human-sized spider creeps out of plain sight and disappears into a dark cranny.*

This adventure includes no map of the tower, but its interior space is easy to imagine. The tower is basically a hollowed-out cylinder 20 feet wide and 60 feet tall. At one point, it was divided into three levels connected by a wooden staircase that hugged the inside wall, but the staircase and much of the two upper floors have collapsed. The ground floor is difficult terrain, and the webs that fill the second floor are thick enough to grant partial cover to creatures lurking beyond them.

Scaling the walls of the tower without climbing gear requires a DC 15 Athletics check, since the rough-hewn stone offers ample handholds and footholds. Characters can easily remove the boards covering the windows. The second-floor windows are 20 feet above ground, and the third-floor windows are 40 feet above ground.

Talther Yorn removed his valuables before vacating the tower. Then, less than a week ago, a pair of goblins decided to hole up here and fell prey to the spiders. Their rotting corpses, both punctured with fang marks, lie amid the wreckage on the ground floor.

6 Ambush Spiders — **Level 2 Lurker**
Medium natural beast (spider) — XP 125 each

HP 28; **Bloodied** 14 — **Initiative** +8
AC 16, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13 — **Perception** +8
Speed 8, climb 8 (spider climb) — Tremorsense 5

Traits

Camouflage
The spider can make Stealth checks to become hidden when it has cover or concealment instead of needing superior cover or total concealment.

Standard Actions

Bite ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage.

Venomous Bite (poison) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature the spider is hidden from); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is slowed and takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends both).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is immobilized instead of slowed and takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends both).
Special: When charging, the spider can use this attack in place of a melee basic attack.

Skills Acrobatics +9, Stealth +9
Str 13 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 10 (+1) **Int** 4 (-2) **Cha** 7 (-1)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Characters who disturb the corpses or explore the tower prompt the spiders to rush forth and attack en masse. The spider swarm hides under a section of collapsed staircase on the ground floor, while the ambush spiders lurk in various crannies 20 to 30 feet above.

Tactics: The spider swarm is relentless and fights until slain. The ambush spiders are canny and use their *camouflage* trait and Stealth skill to hide until they can charge and use *venomous bite*.

Treasure: Each dead goblin wears leather armor and carries a pouch containing 1d6 sp and 2d6 cp. In addition, one of the goblin corpses conceals a *potion of healing*, which requires a DC 13 Perception check to find. The goblins' weapons (short swords and crossbows) are unremarkable.

Spider Swarm — **Level 3 Soldier**
Medium natural beast (spider, swarm) — XP 150

HP 44; **Bloodied** 22 — **Initiative** +6
AC 19, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15 — **Perception** +3
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb) — Tremorsense 5
Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks; **Vulnerable** 5 to close and area attacks

Traits

Swarm Attack ✦ Aura 1
Any enemy that starts its turn in the aura is slowed until the start of its next turn.

Swarm
The swarm can occupy the same space as another creature, and an enemy can enter its space, which is difficult terrain. The swarm cannot be pulled, pushed, or slid by melee or ranged attacks. It can squeeze through any opening that is large enough for at least one of the creatures it comprises.

Web Walk
The spider swarm ignores difficult terrain composed of webs.

Standard Actions

Swarm of Fangs (poison) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Skills Athletics +6, Stealth +9
Str 11 (+1) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 12 (+2) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 7 (-1)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Development: Yorn's tower is a red herring, insofar as it provides no leads or clues to the necromancer's whereabouts. Grygori (area G) might try to lead the characters here if he wants to be rid of them. He knows the tower is infested with spiders that shun him (the spiders find the ghast's stench repulsive), but he can certainly use the spiders to do away with troublesome adventurers.

E. Edge of the Gray Veil

The gray veil extends from the Baron's Hill cemetery in all directions (including up), out to a range of roughly one mile.

As characters approach the edge of the gray veil, read:

The gray veil has a soft but discernible edge where, in a few paces, the world transitions from shades of gray to the normal colors of the season. An insect crossing the threshold going toward Baron's Hill is stripped of its vibrant color, while another crossing in the other direction instantly regains it.

Characters who take the time to follow the edge of the gray veil can determine that it covers a circular area roughly two miles in diameter, centered on a point in Baron's Hill. Characters can pinpoint the exact center of the circle by making a DC 12 group Intelligence check. If at least half of the characters succeed on the check, they correctly pinpoint the cemetery (area C). If the group check fails, the characters erroneously pinpoint the Baron's estate (area B) instead.

F. Barrow Fields

Ancient battles were fought on the fields surrounding Baron's Hill. These forgotten conflicts ended with the survivors gathering the remains of their slaughtered dead—corpses, armor, and weapons—and entombing them beneath earthen mounds. These barrows survive to the present day.

When the characters explore one of these barrow fields, read:

A great field stretches before you. Rising here and there are gray hillocks with large black rocks set upon them. These mounds are too eerily similar to be natural formations.

When the characters first approach a barrow, roll 1d6. On a roll of 1-5, they spot signs of excavation on one side of the barrow, exposing part of a clay brick wall buried deep within the mound. This opening is the work of gravediggers unearthing bones for Talther Yorn's experiments. Such excavations are several years old.

Each barrow is roughly 100 feet in diameter and 30 feet tall, with steep, sloping sides and a flat top covered with large basalt slabs that a stone giant would have trouble knocking over. Characters who inspect the slabs notice etchings too faint to decipher carved into their mossy surfaces. These weather-worn runes are the names of the soldiers and kings entombed below.

A 50-foot-diameter, 10-foot-high hollow tomb made of clay bricks is hidden beneath each mound. More often than not, an excavated tomb contains nothing more than corroded bits of armor and rusted weapons stained with dried blood, since Talther's gravediggers removed all the bones.

Development: If the characters discover a barrow that has not yet been violated, they can dig through the mound to reach the tomb inside. What they find there is up to you.

Excavating a barrow is a time-consuming affair, requiring hundreds of man-hours of backbreaking labor, and it is beyond the scope of this adventure. At some future point in your campaign, the characters might gain a quest that requires them to revisit the barrow fields, excavate a tomb, and retrieve a long-lost relic from a bygone war, or some other item of consequence. It's also possible that plundering the barrow triggers a dreadful curse, similar to the one that transformed Grygori Dilvia into a ghast (see area G, below).

G. Grygori's Cave and Creek

Talther Yorn hired Grygori Dilvia to plunder ancient barrows and battlefields for bones, and Grygori enjoyed the mindless work. The spirits of the dishonored dead cursed Grygori and slowly transformed him into a ghast. Grygori isn't sure at what point he became an undead creature, but he retains enough of his human intelligence to know that the villagers of Baron's Hill would hunt down and destroy him if they understood his true nature. Thus, he keeps to himself and shuns the locals, daring to creep into the village cemetery only under cover of darkness—and then only when Talther Yorn demands it.

Monster: Grygori Dilvia (ghast).

When the characters first approach Grygori's lair, read:

Just visible through the gray autumn trees is a burbling creek flanked by still reeds. The ground slopes up from the creek toward a rocky hillside. About twenty feet up the hill is a ten-foot-diameter hole covered with a crudely fashioned curtain of reeds, twigs, and leaves. Seven evil-looking scarecrows stand in a semicircle around the cave mouth.

Grygori does not remain in one location for very long; the characters might spot him down by the creek catching fish with his claws, or he might be deep in his cave, devouring a meal. He might also be away when the characters first arrive, meeting with Talther Yorn or one of the necromancer's other agents. In the latter case, he might show up just as the characters are exiting his cave. When and where the party confronts the ghast are up to you.

Tactics: Grygori is a straightforward melee combatant who likes to rip immobilized prey to pieces with *rabid claws* or feast on it with *devouring bite*.

If the characters don't attack Grygori on sight, he listens to what they have to say and even answers

Ghast	Level 6 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 250
HP 85; **Bloodied** 42	**Initiative** +6
AC 18, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16	**Perception** +5
Speed 6	Darkvision
Immune disease poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant	
Traits	
☼ **Stench of Death ✦ Aura** 1	
Any living creature that starts its turn within the aura is slowed until the end of the ghast's next turn.	
Standard Actions	
⨭ **Bite ✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d12 + 6 damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the ghast's next turn.	
⨭ **Rabid Claws ✦ At-Will**	
Effect: The ghast makes the following attack twice.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one immobilized creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d12 + 4 damage.	
⨭ **Devouring Bite ✦ Recharge** if the power misses	
Attack: Melee 1 (one immobilized or unconscious creature); +11 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d12 + 7 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
⇜ **Death Burst** (necrotic) **✦ Encounter**	
Trigger: The ghast drops to 0 hit points.	
Attack (No Action): Close burst 2 (living creatures in the burst); +9 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 1d12 + 5 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).	
Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +11	
Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+5)	
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 7 (+1) **Cha** 13 (+4)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common	

their questions. Although he's a ravenous undead creature, he still has a few shreds of humanity left.

If questioned, Grygori readily admits to stealing bones from the village cemetery and using potions of spectral form (obtained from Talther Yorn) to phase through the ground. If asked where he keeps the potions (or any other treasure), he replies, "In a hidden chest." He is referring to the hanging chest in area G7, although the potions are actually in area G5, and his treasure is in area G9. A successful Insight check (opposed by Grygori's untrained Bluff check) reveals that he's trying to lure the party into a trap.

Grygori has strong instincts for self-preservation, and he knows he's the party's best hope of finding Talther Yorn. If he's bloodied, the characters can cajole him into leading them to Yorn's lair (area H), if they promise to release him unharmed at that time. If he can misdirect the party to Yorn's abandoned tower (area D) instead, he does so in a proverbial heartbeat.

Keyed Encounters

Refer to the map of Grygori's cave and creek for the following location descriptions.

G1. Creek

Exploration Encounter

Trout swim upstream in this creek to spawn in the lake to the north. The creek is 3 feet deep and difficult terrain. If Grygori is here, he's standing in the creek catching fish with his bare claws.

G2. Scarecrows

Exploration Encounter

Grygori stole some tattered clothes from the village, stuffed them full of leaves and twigs, and set them on posts around the entrance to his lair. The scarecrows have stuffed burlap sacks or pumpkins for heads, and some of them wear old hats.

Grygori put up the scarecrows to frighten children and keep them away from the cave. Although they are eerie-looking, they are not dangerous. A character can uproot a scarecrow (DC 11 Strength check) or attack it (AC 10, Fortitude/Reflex 5, 10 hit points, vulnerable 5 fire).

G3. Cave Mouth

Exploration Encounter

A drape made of interwoven reeds, twigs, and leaves covers the entrance to this area. Parting it reveals an old cave beyond.

When the characters first peer inside, read:
This dry cave has a ten-foot-high ceiling, and a gray bearskin rug sprawls on the dirt floor. Set into one wall is a ten-foot-deep natural alcove that someone has converted into a cell with a crude but sturdy-looking wooden gate. Four gray goats stare at you from behind the wooden bars. A rusty padlock dangles from the iron latch that secures the gate. A five-foot-wide, eight-foot-high tunnel cuts deeper into the hillside.

The bearskin rug is all that's left of the cave's previous occupant. Grygori killed the bear and kept its hide as a trophy. The iron key that unlocks the cell lies in the dirt under the rug. Characters can also pick the padlock (DC 15 Thievery check) or smash it (AC 15/Fortitude 15, Reflex 5, 10 hit points, resist 5 to all damage).

Grygori captures wild goats and eats them. If the characters release the goats, they bolt for the exit. The cell reeks of animal waste and contains nothing of value.

Corkscrew Tunnel: The open tunnel to the south is a crude but effective slide trap. After 10 feet, the passage begins to curl to the left while descending sharply at a 45-degree angle. The walls and floor here are made of smooth, raw stone. A creature that slides down or fails a DC 21 Athletics check made to climb down falls into the spiked pit at the bottom (see area G4).

Secret Tunnel: Grygori avoids the corkscrew tunnel entirely by using this secret passage. A character searching the south wall notices the secret door with a DC 20 Perception check. The door is heavy and awkward, requiring a standard action to open or close. Beyond is a 15-foot-long tunnel ending in a shaft that descends 45 feet to area G4. A crude wooden ladder fills the shaft; creatures can climb the ladder at half speed, or at full speed by succeeding on a DC 20 Athletics check.

G4. Lower Den

Trap/Hazard Encounter (450 XP)

Characters can reach this unlit cave by descending the corkscrew tunnel or Grygori's secret ladder.

Traps/Hazards: 1 spiked pit, 2 flesh-eating dust traps.

If the characters slide or fall down the corkscrew tunnel, read:
The corkscrew tunnel gives way to a ten-foot-wide spiked pit in one corner of a dark cave that reeks of death.

If the characters enter the cave via the ladder, read:
The ladder descends forty-five feet to the bottom of the shaft, which lies at one end of a short tunnel that opens into a dark cave. In the northeast corner is an open pit, and alcoves dot the west wall. Rough-hewn staircases lead up to the south and east. The stench of death fills your nostrils.

Characters searching the cave find a pick and a shovel leaning against the far wall of the westernmost alcove. The cave also contains some more interesting features, detailed below.

Secret Doors: The western half of the cave contains three alcoves. Set into the back of each one is a heavy secret door that requires a DC 21 Perception check to spot and a standard action to open or close. The secret doors have no locks, and they open to reveal hidden tunnels (areas G6–G9) that Grygori dug out himself using the pick and the shovel.

Spiked Pit: Any character who slides or tumbles down the corkscrew tunnel (see area G3) falls into a 10-foot-wide, 10-foot-deep spiked pit in the northeast corner of the cave. The spikes are simply sharp wooden stakes embedded in the stone.

Spiked Pit **Level 4 Trap**
Object XP 200

Detect automatic **Initiative** –
Immune attacks

Triggered Actions

Attack ✦ At-Will
Trigger: A creature enters one of the pit's four squares.
Attack (No Action): Melee 1 (the triggering creature); +9 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target falls 10 feet to the bottom of the spiked pit, takes 3d10 + 6 damage, and falls prone.
Miss: The target returns to the last square it occupied, and its movement ends immediately.

Countermeasures

✦ **Escape:** Athletics DC 15 (move action). *Success:* The character can climb out of the pit.

Stairs: Two short flights of rough-hewn stairs climb 5 feet to area G5. The stairs are treated as difficult terrain to ascend and normal terrain otherwise.

Grygori has trapped both staircases. The middle step of each flight is a loose slab of stone set atop a fat pouch of flesh-eating dust. Any character who steps on the slab without first disarming the trap releases a cloud of acidic dust that fills the staircase and all adjacent squares before settling.

Treasure: Characters who disarm the staircase traps can retrieve the pouches of flesh-eating dust (one per staircase) and hurl them. Each pouch of dust can be used only once, or sold to an interested buyer for 10 gp.

Standard Action

Pouch of Flesh-Eating Dust (acid)
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +5 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 8 acid damage.
Miss: Half damage.

2 Flesh-Eating Dust Traps **Level 2 Trap**
Object XP 125 each

Detect Perception DC 20 **Initiative** –
Immune attacks

Triggered Actions

Attack (acid) **✦ Encounter**
Trigger: A creature enters the trapped square.
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 1 (creatures in the burst); +5 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 8 acid damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The trap is disarmed.

Countermeasures

✦ **Disarm:** Thievery DC 13 (standard action). *Success:* The trap is disarmed.

G5. Charnel Cave

Trap/Hazard Encounter (150 XP)

Grygori eats his meals here and typically resides here when he's not fishing, expanding his lair, or performing some sordid task for Talther Yorn.

Trap/Hazard: 1 child scarecrow.

When the characters reach this cave, read:
The foul stench of death hangs heavy in the air. Rotting animal carcasses and brittle fish bones litter the floor, and dug into the walls are small niches packed with tiny animal skulls. Delicate mobiles made of twine, twigs, and dead crows dangle from the ten-foot-high ceiling. A woodcutter's axe, a crossbow, and a quiver of bolts lean against the north wall, between the rough-hewn staircases. In the far corner stands a small child with its back to you.

The brittle fish bones crunch underfoot, and the rotting carcasses include two goats, a deer that Grygori caught drinking from "his" creek, and a wild pig. The "child" in the corner is a doll similar to the scarecrows in area G2, only smaller (about the size of an adult halfling). This is, in fact, another one of Grygori's crude traps.

Child Scarecrow: The 3-foot-tall doll is dressed in rags stuffed with leaves, and its wooden shoes are filled with rocks. The assemblage is wired to a small flint plug covering an oil-filled compartment hidden in the floor. If the doll is picked up or tampered with, the flint plug pulls free, causing a spark that ignites the oil, which in turn triggers a fiery explosion.

Child Scarecrow **Level 3 Trap**
Object XP 150

Detect Perception DC 21 **Initiative** –
Immune attacks

Triggered Actions

Attack (fire) **✦ Encounter**
Trigger: A creature moves or tampers with the scarecrow.
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 1 (creatures in the burst); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d6 + 10 fire damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The scarecrow is destroyed, and the trap is disarmed.

Countermeasures

✦ **Disarm:** Thievery DC 21 (standard action). *Success:* The trap is disarmed. *Failure (16 or lower):* The trap triggers.

Treasure: One of the niches carved into the south wall contains an empty burlap sack and a hollowed-out turnip with a cork in the top. The turnip holds the equivalent of two *potions of spectral form*. Grygori uses this magical elixir to phase in and out of buried coffins, and the burlap sack to carry stolen bones.

Potion of Spectral Form Level 5 Uncommon

This thin liquid transforms you into a spectral apparition.

Consumable: Potion 50 gp
Power ✦ Consumable (Minor Action)
You become insubstantial and gain phasing until the end of your next turn. While insubstantial, all attacks made by you deal half damage except those that deal force or psychic damage, and you take half damage from all attacks except those that deal force or psychic damage.

G6. North Tunnel

Trap/Hazard Encounter (125 XP)

Beyond the secret door, Grygori has excavated a 40-foot-long, 8-foot-high, unlit tunnel. He's also rigged the west–east stretch of the tunnel with a trap.

Trap/Hazard: Wooden caltrops.

When anyone rounds the tunnel corner, read:
The west-east arm of this dead-end tunnel descends at a slight angle, and water seepage has filled the last twenty feet with mud.

The mud gradually deepens as one travels west toward the dead end, where the depth is 5 feet. After the first 5 feet, the mud becomes difficult terrain. The area holds nothing of interest other than the trap.

Spiked Floor: Grygori has hidden a tripwire under the mud, 10 feet down the west–east stretch of hallway (15 feet east of the dead end). A tripped character falls headfirst into the adjacent square (west of the tripwire), which is lined with sharp wooden caltrops hidden below the mud. A character using a pole or weapon to prod the mud gains a +5 bonus to Perception checks made to detect the trap.

Wooden Caltrops	**Level 2 Trap**
Object	XP 125
Detect Perception DC 20	**Initiative** –
Immune attacks	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
⸸ **Attack ✦ Encounter**	
Trigger: A creature crosses a tripwire stretched between two squares.	
Attack (No Action): Melee 1 (triggering creature); +5 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d6 + 8 damage, and the target falls prone.	
COUNTERMEASURES	
✦ **Remove:** Once the trap is detected, the spikes on the floor can be safely removed (no skill check required).	

G7. Secret Shaft

Combat Encounter Level 1 (175 XP)

The secret door opens to reveal an alcove containing another nasty surprise.

Monster: 1 rot grub swarm.

When the characters open the secret door, read:
The secret door opens to reveal the bottom of a dark shaft. A decrepit wooden chest hangs from the twenty-foot-high ceiling by a frayed rope.

The rope is looped over a rusty pulley bolted to the ceiling. A large knot secures the other end of the rope to a hook above the secret door, so that the chest hangs 10 feet above the floor. A character can unfasten the rope and attempt to lower the chest gently to the floor, but doing so triggers the trap.

Hanging Chest: Grygori has rigged the pulley on the ceiling with a blade designed to cut the rope as the chest is lowered. When the rope snaps, the chest falls. The chest is very brittle and breaks apart when caught or when it hits the floor, releasing the swarm of rot grubs contained within. The rot grubs are small enough that the swarm can move through cracks in the bottom of the secret door to pursue fleeing prey.

The chest is fragile and has AC 10, Fortitude/Reflex 5, and 1 hit point. A character who climbs up the shaft and presses an ear against the chest can make a DC 25 Perception check to hear the rot grub swarm writhing around inside it.

Rot Grub Swarm	**Level 4 Brute**
Medium natural beast (swarm)	XP 175
HP 63; **Bloodied** 31	**Initiative** +3
AC 15, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 15	**Perception** +2
Speed 5	Darkvision
Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks; **Vulnerable** 5 against close and area attacks	
TRAITS	
☼ **Swarm Attack ✦ Aura** 1	
Any enemy that starts it turn within the aura takes 5 damage plus 2 extra damage for each additional rot grub swarm adjacent to the enemy.	
Swarm	
The swarm can occupy the same space as another creature, and an enemy can enter its space, which is difficult terrain. The swarm cannot be pulled, pushed, or slid by melee or ranged attacks. It can squeeze through any opening that is large enough for at least one of the creatures it comprises.	
Clumsy Attacker	
The rot grub swarm cannot make basic attacks.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⸸ **Infesting Bite ✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: The target takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
First Failed Saving Throw: The target takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends).	
Second Failed Saving Throw: The target takes ongoing 15 damage (save ends).	
Str 10 (+2) **Dex** 13 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+2)	
Con 13 (+3) **Int** 2 (-2) **Cha** 4 (-1)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

G8. South Tunnel

Exploration Encounter

Grygori began excavating this tunnel after he became frustrated with water seepage in the north tunnel (area G6). The unlit tunnel bends northward, then extends another 20 feet before coming to a dead end. A side passage heading south leads to area G9.

Grygori hasn't had time to place any sort of trap or monster here.

G9. Grygori's Loot

Trap/Hazard Encounter (300 XP)

Grygori keeps his personal hoard in a secret vault at the end of this passage. The dark tunnel leads south for 15 feet before bending east, then finally turning north and coming to an abrupt end—or so it seems.

Trap/Hazard: 1 spring-loaded javelin trap.

Secret Door: A character searching the end of the tunnel can detect the secret door with a DC 21 Perception check. It takes a Perception check result of 25 or higher to realize that the door is not made of stone, but rather a brittle material similar to papier-mâché. A character who searches the back wall for secret doors must first cross the 5-foot-square section of floor in front of it, which is actually a pressure plate. The pressure plate is rigged to a pair of spring-loaded wooden javelins mounted behind the secret door. When a creature steps on the pressure plate, the javelins punch through the secret door like knives through paper. A character can smash or walk through the secret door easily.

Spring-Loaded Javelins	**Level 3 Elite Trap**
Object	XP 300
Detect Perception DC 21 (pressure plate)	**Initiative** –
Immune attacks	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
ǂ **Attack** ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: A creature steps on the trapped square.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The trap makes the following attack twice against the triggering enemy.	
Attack: Ranged 10 (the triggering creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 10 damage.	
COUNTERMEASURES	
✦ **Disarm:** Thievery DC 21 (standard action). *Success:* The trap is disarmed. *Failure (16 or lower):* The character triggers the trap, which gains a +2 bonus to the attack rolls.	

Treasure: Beyond the secret door is a small, 8-foot-tall chamber with an unlocked wooden chest resting against the far north wall. The chest contains various baubles that Grygori found in the graves of the Baron's Hill cemetery, as well as other valuables he has acquired over the years. In total, the hoard consists of ten pieces of cheap jewelry (worth 10 gp each), six pieces of fine jewelry (worth 100 gp each), one piece of exquisite jewelry (a platinum brooch worth 1,000 gp), and a level 5 magic item.

Attempted sale of the jewelry in Baron's Hill carries a noncumulative 10 percent chance per item sold that someone recognizes the piece as belonging to a dead family member or former resident, and demands its immediate return.

H. Yornhaven

Talther Yorn's underground lair used to be the tomb of an ancient warlord named Deveric Stormtalon, whom history has all but forgotten. The necromancer has spent the past several years quietly expanding his abode. Specifically, he has been converting crypts into classrooms while attracting a sordid retinue of followers. He hopes to turn the dungeon complex into a thriving school of necromancy and share his knowledge with other evil minds.

Grygori Dilvia might be persuaded to lead the characters to Yornhaven, or the characters might find the dungeon complex without the ghast's help. The characters could get lucky and find a trail of footprints (human-sized or goblin-sized) leading toward Yornhaven. If they haven't already encountered the ghast, they might catch sight of Grygori making his way to or from Yorn's secret lair.

A perpetual fog surrounds Yornhaven, trapped by the hills north of the village. The fog completely obscures the main entrance beyond a range of 30 feet, which is one reason why the necromancer chose this location as his new lair.

Talther's dungeon lies within the gray veil, and the necromancer is just as confused by the sudden disappearance of color as everyone else. It hasn't occurred to him that he might be responsible—at least indirectly. Rather, he has concluded that the gray veil is harmless, and investigating it is not worth the interruption to his necromantic experiments.

When the characters can see area H1, read:
Fog reduces visibility to thirty feet or so, masking the steep gray hill ahead until you are almost upon it. Carved into its rocky face is a ten-foot-tall, ten-foot-wide, twenty-foot-deep alcove housing a pair of gray stone doors. The alcove walls flanking the entrance have arrow slits cut into them. All is quiet, and not a creature stirs.

Yornhaven actually has two entrances—the obvious one, and a hidden one. Both are described below.

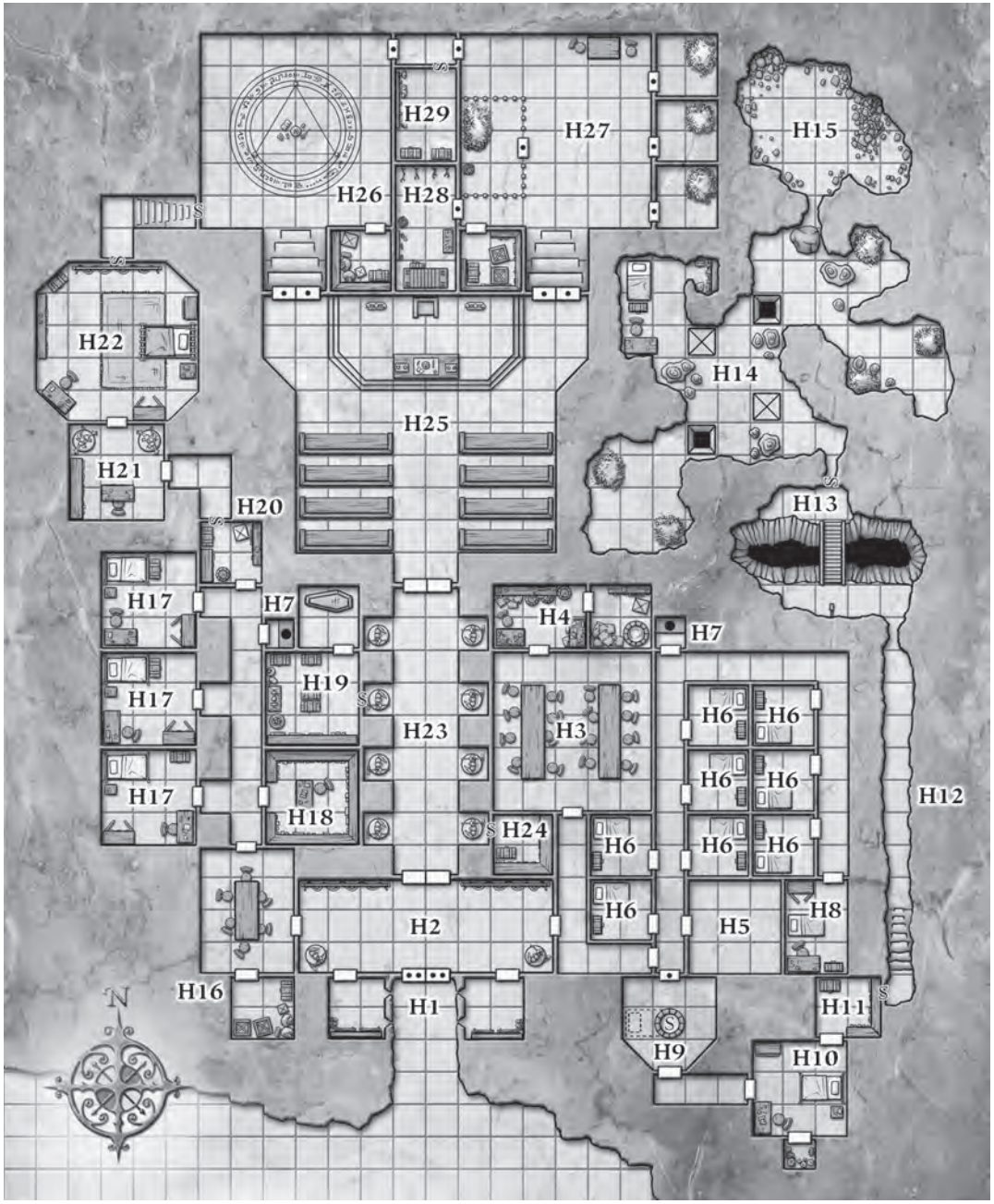
Main Entrance

The main entrance (area H1) is carved into the south side of an enormous and steep hill and is difficult to spot from a distance because of the ever-present fog. The good news for the party is that the fog also obscures any approach.

The main entrance has no guards standing outside, but guards watch the entrance through arrow slits to either side of it. The front doors are also Arcane Locked, making them difficult to force open.

Characters can use stealth to reach the doors, but any attempt to pick the lock or force their way inside trips the alarm and brings the dungeon's defenders out in force. Characters can also walk up to the doors and knock, but unless the guards recognize them or know they're coming, the characters still draw fire and trip the alarm.

If Grygori (area G) accompanies the party, the guards recognize him and open the front doors to let the ghast in. At that point, Grygori turns on the characters and orders the guards to slay them all.



Secret Entrance

The other entrance to Yornhaven is a 50-foot-deep, naturally formed chimney leading down to a sealed cave (area H15). The chimney is set farther back on the hill, so the characters cannot see it from the ground. Swarms of bats exit the chimney at dusk and return shortly before dawn, so characters watching the hill from a high vantage point see the bats come and go at these times.

For more information on the secret chimney and the cave below it, see area H15. If the characters infiltrate the dungeon stronghold by this route, they stand a better chance of catching the necromancer and his followers by surprise.

Dungeon Features

Talther Yorn's dungeon complex has many recurring features, which are described below:

Ceilings: Most ceilings are 10 feet high. One notable exception is area H25, which has a 20-foot-high vaulted ceiling.

Doors: Interior doors are made of heavy oak with iron hinges and handles. Talther Yorn and his half-orc servant, Urn, each carry a key that opens all locked doors in the dungeon. A character can pick a lock with a DC 20 Thievery check, or force a door open with a DC 18 Strength check, or attack a door (AC/Fortitude 20, Reflex 5, 60 hit points).

Secret doors are unlocked, made of stone, and blend in well with the surrounding stonework. Detecting a secret door requires a DC 21 Perception check. A typical secret door has either a pressure plate or a lever to open it. A character who detects a secret door also finds the method to open it.

Light: Torches in skull-shaped sconces illuminate most corridors and rooms (except as noted in the text). Although the torches give off smoke that blackens the ceilings, they have the added benefit of keeping the dungeon warm and dry.

Stairs: Staircases are carved from stone and are difficult terrain to ascend (normal terrain otherwise).

Yorn's Assassins

Before becoming a recluse, Talther Yorn was an adventurer. One of the evil forces he encountered was a fanatical death cult called the Grave, whose assassins wielded bone swords. After he became a vampire, he reached out to the Grave and lured the organization into service with the promise of spreading death across the land.

To ensure the assassins' loyalty, Yorn cast a ritual that turns them into thralls with rheumy mist in their eyes. Characters who look into the assassins' eyes don't see their own reflections, but rather the face of Talther Yorn. The mist clears when the assassin dies.

Keyed Encounters

Refer to the map of Yornhaven for the following location descriptions.

H1. Main Entrance

Combat Encounter Level 2 (700 XP)

Talther Yorn doesn't like unwanted visitors, so he employs assassins to keep his dungeon safe, slay intruders, and deliver any corpses to him for animation as zombies.

Monsters: 4 veteran assassins (named Gaston Hedgely, Naethyn Mires, Ruttiger Prilke, and Sardon Villard; see "Yorn's Assassins" above for details).

When the characters can see the doors, read:
A carving of a two-headed hawk wearing a breastplate adorns the stone double doors. Its outstretched wings curl upward majestically, and its talons grasp a pair of swords. The arrow slits to either side of the doors are too narrow to crawl through, but the rooms beyond are torchlit, as evidenced by the orange light spilling out of these openings.

Perception DC 21: *You see moving shadows in the guardrooms.*

4 Veteran Assassins	**Level 4 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 175 each
HP 54; **Bloodied** 27	**Initiative** +7
AC 18, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15	**Perception** +4
Speed 6	
Standard Actions	
Bone Longsword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 3 damage. If the target is granting combat advantage to the veteran assassin, the target takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
Crossbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 3 damage.	
No Escape (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Requirement: The veteran assassin must have combat advantage against the target.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 3 damage, and the target falls prone and is slowed (save ends).	
Minor Actions	
Flanking Step ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The veteran assassin can shift 1 square if the shift puts it in a flanking position against an enemy.	
Skills Athletics +10, Bluff +8, Stealth +10	
Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 17 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+4)	
Con 14 (+4) **Int** 13 (+3) **Cha** 13 (+3)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common	
Equipment bone longsword, crossbow, 20 bolts	

Four veteran assassins stand watch in the guardrooms—two per room. They have crossbows loaded and ready to fire, and they watch the entrance through the slits in the walls. If any strangers enter the stronghold, the assassins draw their swords and engage in melee combat.

Arrow Slits: The arrow slits taper to a width of 6 inches and grant superior cover to creatures inside the guardrooms. A veteran assassin can shoot at any target in the square adjacent to the arrow slit, or any square adjacent to that square.

Guardrooms: Each of these 10-foot-square rooms is bare except for a wooden rack mounted to the south wall. The rack contains an assortment of spears and halberds, as well as shields, heavy cloaks, and hanging quivers of crossbow bolts.

Stone Doors: A DC 21 History check reveals that the two-headed hawk engraving is the emblem of the fallen warlord whose tomb this place once was. (At your discretion, a successful check might allow the character to recall the name of this warlord: Deveric Stormtalon. Alternatively, it could be a figure from you own campaign's history.) Talther Yorn has performed an Arcane Lock ritual on the doors, which require a DC 26 Strength or Thievery check to open. (The necromancer and his allies can open them normally.) The doors' hinges are on the inside, and the doors push inward when opened. Smashing through the doors is possible, but each door has AC/Fortitude 25, Reflex 5, 200 hit points, and resist 10 to all damage.

Treasure: Each assassin carries a pouch containing 2d20 gp and 1d6 gems worth 50 gp each.

H2. Foyer

Exploration Encounter

This thoroughfare connects the eastern wing of the dungeon (areas H3–H15) to the western wing (areas H16–H22). It also leads to what used to be the central tomb (area H25).

Read:
This ten-foot-high, forty-foot-long hall has a wooden door set in the middle of the western wall and another in the middle of the eastern wall, plus a double set of wooden doors in the north wall with a stone carving of a two-headed hawk above them. A tapestry depicting scenes of glorious battle hangs from an iron rod on either side of the double doors. Standing in two corners, facing the northern set of doors, are identical statues depicting hawk-headed warriors clad in armor and clutching spears in their clawed gauntlets.

Once every hour, an assassin from area H3 passes through this hall to check on the guards in the southern guardrooms (area H1). Otherwise, the hall is unguarded. Sounds of combat here alert the inhabitants of area H3, who arrive in 2 rounds.

Statues: The warlord Deveric Stormtalon commanded soldiers who wore helmets shaped like hawk heads and capes that looked like stylized wings. These statues actually represent the soldiers as hawk-headed humanoids with talons for hands. The statues are harmless and provide partial cover to creatures standing behind them.

Tapestries: The two tapestries, though finely wrought in their day, have deteriorated with age and fray easily. Each offers an artist's interpretation of a battle fought and won by the warlord entombed in this dungeon (rendered in various shades of gray until the curse of the gray veil is lifted). Each tapestry weighs 15 pounds and brings 50 gp if sold.

H3. Mess Hall

Combat Encounter Level 2 (700 XP)

Talther Yorn's evil henchmen fraternize here while devouring meals.

Monsters: 4 veteran assassins (named Lesard Devayne, Jorr Featherblade, Brostus Mainger, and Havar Slimdagger; see "Yorn's Assassins" and statistics).

Read:
Two wooden dining tables stand in this torchlit chamber. Chairs surround the tables, which are strewn with wooden flagons and food scraps. In the north wall is a wooden door.

Regardless of the time, four veteran assassins are here, talking and eating. Periodically one stands up and heads into the kitchen (area H4) for more food or drink, or heads to the latrine (area H7), or checks on the guards stationed at the main entrance (area H1).

Development: Sounds of combat here alert the assassins sleeping in area H6. They arrive 3 rounds after combat begins.

Treasure: Each assassin carries a pouch containing 2d20 gp and 1d6 gems worth 50 gp each.

H4. Kitchen and Pantry

Exploration Encounter

The kitchen contains two cluttered tables, a shelf, and an assortment of crates containing foodstuffs (mostly dried meat and fruit) and casks of ale, most of it acquired by the bandit captain Severine (see area H10) from brigands.

The smaller eastern room is a pantry containing more supplies and a 50-foot-deep well. A bucket tied to a 50-foot rope rests atop a crate nearby. Climbing the well shaft requires a DC 15 Athletics check.

H5. Larder

Exploration Encounter

A large patch of brown mold grows on the ceiling of this 15-foot-square, 10-foot-high room. Nine iron chains fastened to the ceiling end in meat hooks, and skinned animal carcasses hang from three of them.

The brown mold keeps the room ice cold—so cold, in fact, that any creature in the room for longer than 1 minute must succeed on a DC 13 Endurance check every minute thereafter or take 1d10 cold damage.

H6. Assassins' Quarters

Combat Encounter Level 5 (1,050 XP)

The mercenary assassins who work for Talther Yorn sleep in these eight rooms.

Monsters: 6 veteran assassins (named Derris Arkwright, Cavil Brook, Sandor Edgely, Thander Mistlebarke, Barlow Webb, and Edwin Westgale; see "Yorn's Assassins" and statistics).

Each of these rooms looks the same:
This ten-foot-square room has a bunk bed in one corner and a wooden chest pushed against the far wall.

At any given time, eight veteran assassins are resting in these rooms. (The remaining assassins are in areas H1, H3, and H25). Place the assassins wherever you see fit; a given room might contain two assassins, one assassin, or none. All of the assassins are light sleepers and awaken to loud noises in nearby areas. They keep their weapons within easy reach.

The chests contain traveling gear.

Treasure: Each assassin carries a pouch containing 2d20 gp and 1d6 gems worth 50 gp each.

H7. Latrine

Exploration Encounter

The complex has two latrines—one in the western wing of the dungeon, and another in the eastern wing. Each of these small cubicles reeks of urine and contains a stone bench with a hole cut into it. Below the hole is a 10-foot-deep, 2-foot-diameter shaft that opens into a 15-foot-wide, rough-hewn cistern containing 3 feet of water mixed with human waste.

H8. Urn's Quarters

Exploration Encounter

A half-orc death mage named Urn Shatterskull sleeps here at odd hours. He is not in his quarters when the adventurers first arrive; he's torturing a prisoner in area H28.

Read:
In this chamber is a bed draped in sheets of stitched skin, plus a desk, a chair, a wardrobe, and a chest with a built-in lock. Hanging on the east wall is a morbid collection of masks made from hide, bone, and other materials. One of the masks is missing, as evidenced by a single bare hook.

Urn likes to make and wear masks. Twenty-three masks currently hang on the eastern wall, and each one has a unique appearance. None of them are magical or valuable. The bed sheets are made of stitched skin from a variety of humanoids, most of them Urn's personal kills.

Scraps of cloth, strips of leather, animal fangs, and other raw materials that Urn uses to make masks litter the top of the desk. The wardrobe contains a ghastly assortment of hand-stitched apparel, but again, nothing of value.

Urn carries a key that unlocks his chest. A character can also pick the lock (DC 21 Thievery check), or smash the chest open (AC/Fortitude 20, Reflex 5, 25 hit points).

Treasure: The chest contains an assortment of ritual components worth a total of 500 gp, as well as a level 6 magic item.

H9. Well Room

Exploration Encounter

This room contains a well surrounded by a 2-foot-high wall of mortared stone. The well shaft plunges 50 feet to a natural underground cistern filled to a depth of 20 feet with fresh water. Resting on the lip of the well is a bucket tied to a rope that's looped over a pulley bolted to the 10-foot-high ceiling. The shaft has abundant handholds and requires a DC 15 Athletics check to climb.

Hidden Niche: About 30 feet down the shaft is a 5-foot-deep niche in the western wall. A character standing at the top of the well can spot the niche with a DC 21 Perception check if he or she has darkvision or a light source that can shine bright light out to 6 squares or more. Tucked into the back of this niche is a locked wooden chest, hidden here by the bandit captain Severine (area H10).

Severine has a key to the chest concealed on her person, but a character can also pick its lock (DC 21 Thievery check) or smash open the chest (AC/Fortitude 20, Reflex 5, 25 hit points).

Treasure: The chest contains a sack with 500 sp, a sack with 250 gp, two *potions of healing*, and a level 6 magic item.

H10. Bandit Captain's Quarters

Roleplaying Encounter or Combat Encounter
Level 3 (1,000 XP)

Talther Yorn employs a sly half-elf bandit captain named Severine Darthal to acquire foodstuffs and other supplies from goblin bandits and human brigands known to haunt the region. When she's not away gathering supplies, she's here with her two pet guard drakes, Kroag and Roane.

Monsters: Severine Darthal (half-elf bandit captain), 2 guard drakes.

When the characters enter this room, read:
This square room is immaculate. A comfortable bed stands against the far wall, next to an end table with a lantern and a wine glass resting on it. Other furnishings include a desk, a chair, and a tall wooden wardrobe. The north wall has a door in its easternmost end, and the south wall has a door in the middle.

The desk contains a few sheets of parchment, a quill, a jar of ink, a deck of *Three-Dragon Ante*™ cards, and little else. The wardrobe holds traveling clothes and a backpack containing a full canteen and six days of trail rations.

The southern closet contains the bandit captain's private stash of supplies, all of them stolen. A small brazier rests on the floor, and a broom stands in one corner.

The lantern and wine glass resting atop the bedside table are ordinary.

Bandit Captain: Severine is a true mercenary and survivor. When confronted by hostile intruders, her first instinct is to negotiate a truce. She fights only in self-defense. Talther Yorn pays well, but Severine does not pretend to enjoy the necromancer's company or that of the cutthroats he employs as guards. She is wanted for many crimes and uses Yornhaven as a sanctuary, nothing more. The adventurers' arrival means that the old tomb is no longer secure enough for her needs.

Severine has never been in the western wing (areas H16–H22) and doesn't know about the secret doors in areas H23, but she has been everywhere else. Whenever she and Talther Yorn have business to discuss, they meet in his "classroom" (area H25). She can provide the following additional information under duress, or as part of a negotiated effort to win the party's trust:

- Talther Yorn recently performed a necromantic ritual that transformed him into a vampire. A month ago, before his transformation, he paid Severine to acquire a coffin, but she doesn't know where he keeps it.

- The necromancer has an ogre zombie for a bodyguard. Arcane script, like that found on many ritual scrolls, covers the ogre's dead flesh. Talther also has a half-orc servant named Urn Shatterskull, who has a mask fetish.
- Talther Yorn has put the word out that he's looking for apprentices, but so far no one has stepped forward. Severine has spies in nearby settlements "fishing" for likely candidates.
- The necromancer lured a gang of goblins to his stronghold and has been using them as test subjects. He has turned several of them into zombies and tricked the others into thinking this transformation makes them more powerful. The little cretins are holed up in a secret cave nearby. (Severine reveals the secret door in area H11, which leads to the goblins' lair.)
- Talther Yorn tasks Grygori Dilvia with retrieving bones from the Baron's Hill cemetery, then grinds the bones into dust. Severine suspects that the dust is a key component in the necromancer's vile rituals.
- Before he found Severine, Talther Yorn employed a trio of bandits to do grunt work. They started to demand too much money for their labors, so Yorn had them killed and then brought them back as subservient ghouls. He uses them to guard the dungeon, where he keeps a few stray prisoners under lock and key.
- No one in the complex, including Talther Yorn, seems to know what has caused everything to turn gray.

Tactics: Severine uses *triggering slash* to enable one guard drake to make extra melee basic attacks alongside her. The drakes deal more damage with their bite attacks while they fight within 2 squares of their mistress.

Treasure: Severine carries a pouch containing 50 gp. She keeps the rest of her treasure in area H9, hidden from the greedy eyes of Yorn's vile henchmen.

Half-Elf Bandit Captain **Level 6 Skirmisher (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid, half-elf — XP 250

HP 69; **Bloodied** 34 — **Initiative** +9
AC 20, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18 — **Perception** +8
Speed 6

Standard Actions

Longsword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 5 damage, and the captain shifts 1 square.

Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d4 + 7 damage.

Slash and Dash (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚅ ⚃
Effect: The captain uses *longsword*, shifts up to 2 squares, and then uses *dagger*.

Triggered Slash (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚃
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 4 damage, one ally shifts 1 square and makes a melee basic attack as a free action.

Skills Athletics +11, Diplomacy +11, Insight +8, Stealth +12
Str 16 (+6) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+3)
Con 13 (+4) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+6)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment leather armor, longsword, 6 daggers

2 Guard Drakes **Level 2 Brute**
Small natural beast (reptile) — XP 125 each

HP 48; **Bloodied** 24 — **Initiative** +3
AC 15, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12 — **Perception** +7
Speed 6

Standard Actions

Bite ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 3 damage, or 1d10 + 9 while the drake is within 2 squares of an ally.

Str 16 (+4) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 18 (+5) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 12 (+2)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

H11. Bandit Captain's Cellar

Trap/Hazard Encounter (150 XP)

Severine (area H10) enjoys fine wine and keeps a modest supply here. She also knows that Talther Yorn's hired assassins sometimes steal a bottle or two while she's away on business.

Trap/Hazard: 1 chest of darts.

Read:
Wooden racks laden with wine bottles cover the eastern and southern walls. A large wooden chest stands against the north wall directly across from the door.

The room contains the following features:

Secret Door: Hidden behind a wine rack in the northeast corner is a secret door. Tugging on an empty bottle on the middle shelf causes that 5-foot section of rack to swing outward on concealed hinges, exposing an open doorway with a rough-hewn tunnel beyond (area H12). The secret door can be opened from the other side by releasing a wooden catch near the floor and simply pushing on the backside of the wine rack.

Treasure: The wine racks contain 50 bottles of fine wine (worth 10 gp each) and 15 bottles of exquisite wine (worth 100 gp each).

Wooden Chest: The large chest in the corner is unlocked but trapped. Opening the lid releases a flurry of poisoned, spring-loaded darts. The chest contains nothing other than the trap.

Chest of Darts	Level 3 Trap
Object	XP 150
Detect Perception DC 21	**Initiative** –
Immune attacks	
Triggered Actions	
Attack (poison) ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: The chest is opened.	
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 1 (creatures in the burst); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 damage plus 3d6 poison damage.	
Effect: The trap is disarmed.	
Countermeasures	
✦ **Disarm:** Thievery DC 21 (standard action). *Success:* The trap is disarmed. *Failure:* The trap triggers.	

H12. Secret Tunnel

Exploration Encounter

This unlit, rough-hewn tunnel contains a carved staircase located just beyond the secret door in area H11. The tunnel's northern end narrows to a width of only 1½ feet. Medium creatures must squeeze to get through this opening.

Characters navigating this tunnel with light sources cannot surprise the goblin guards stationed in area H13.

H13. Bridged Chasm

Combat Encounter Level 1 (300 XP)

This cave occupies a key position between Talther Yorn's complex and the goblin caves to the north.

Monsters: 3 goblin cutthroats.

Read:

A single torch sticking out of the south wall illuminates a natural cave bisected by a deep chasm. A sturdy wooden bridge spans the gap, leading to a five-foot-deep ledge on the north side. There, a lone goblin stands guard.

Perception DC 18: *Two more goblins lurk underneath the bridge.*

One goblin cutthroat stands in the square north of the bridge; the other two are hiding under the bridge and have readied actions to scurry up into flanking positions when an enemy tries to cross the chasm.

Bridge: The bridge has 3-foot-high railings on each side and is safe to cross.

Chasm: The chasm plunges 50 feet into a 20-foot-deep pool of still water. A creature that falls into the chasm doesn't take damage but could drown if it's wearing heavy armor and can't stay afloat (see the Athletics skill description for swimming rules). The walls of the chasm have abundant handholds and require a DC 15 Athletics check to climb.

Everburning Torch: Wedged into a crack in the south wall is an *everburning torch* that has two special properties, which are described below. A character can ascertain both properties with a DC 13 Arcana check. The torch's flame is actually green in color, but this hue is not apparent until the gray veil is lifted. This unique *everburning torch* is worth 1,000 gp to an interested buyer.

Properties

- ✦ Creatures within the torch's bright light radius (5 squares) cannot regain hit points.
- ✦ Undead creatures within the torch's bright light radius (5 squares) are weakened.

Secret Door: A secret door on the northern ledge opens to reveal a short, 2-foot-wide tunnel leading to area H14.

Tactics: If the characters enter from the south, the goblin on the north ledge hurls daggers at them. When he runs out of daggers, he opens the secret door and flees, closing the door behind him to slow pursuers. While he's alerting the goblins in area H14, the two cutthroats hidden under the bridge try to flank enemies while attacking with their swords.

If the characters enter from the north, the goblin on the ledge runs across the bridge and holds his ground. When bloodied, he tries to flee. The goblins under the bridge use the same tactics described above.

Treasure: In addition to the magic torch, the characters find 1d10 cp and 1d10 sp stashed on each captured or killed goblin. In addition to coins, each goblin has a 1-in-6 chance of possessing a small gem or valuable trinket worth 50 gp.

3 Goblin Cutthroats		Level 1 Skirmisher
Small natural humanoid		XP 100 each
HP 30; **Bloodied** 15		**Initiative** +5
AC 15, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13		**Perception** +2
Speed 6		Low-light vision
Standard Actions		
⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage, or 2d6 + 5 if the goblin has combat advantage against the target. In addition, the goblin can shift 1 square.		
➢ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**		
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d4 + 5 damage.		
Move Actions		
Deft Scurry ✦ **At-Will**		
Effect: The goblin shifts up to 3 squares.		
Triggered Actions		
Goblin Tactics ✦ **At-Will**		
Trigger: A melee attack misses the goblin.		
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The goblin shifts 1 square.		
Skills Stealth +8, Thievery +8		
Str 13 (+1)	**Dex** 17 (+3)	**Wis** 14 (+2)
Con 14 (+2)	**Int** 8 (-1)	**Cha** 8 (-1)
Alignment evil	**Languages** Common, Goblin	
Equipment leather armor, short sword, 2 daggers		

H14. Goblin Caves

Combat Encounter Level 1 (500 XP) and Trap/Hazard Encounter (200 XP)

Talther Yorn convinced a goblin war chief that he could make the goblin troops stronger by performing necromantic experiments on them. The war chief ordered the goblins holed up in this small network of

caves to serve as test subjects for the necromancer's rituals, and Yorn has duped them into believing that his experiments will make them rich and powerful.

Monsters: Vlark (goblin hex hurler), 6 goblin cutters, 2 goblin cutthroats (see area H13 for statistics). Vlark occupies the furnished cave to the northwest. The cutters gather in the eastern caves, while the cutthroats lurk in the southwest cave.

Traps/Hazards: 2 hidden pits.

Read:

A network of small, damp caves spreads out ahead. The ceiling is uneven but averages ten feet high, whereas the floor is mostly flat, with a few stalagmites rising here and there. In a couple of places, the floor gives way to an open pit. Torches set into the walls cast many shadows.

Tucked in various nooks and crannies are four mounds of straw and leaves that the goblins use as beds. The goblin hexer who leads the group has more comfortable accommodations—a bed, a desk, a chair, and a closet containing alchemical supplies and an assortment of potions (see "Treasure" below).

Boulder: The goblins have blocked the entrance to area H15 with a large round boulder. A character can roll aside the boulder with a DC 21 Strength check, exposing a 4-foot-high, 2-foot-wide passage. The boulder keeps the bat swarms in area H15 out of the goblins' caves.

Pits: Marked on the map are two open pits and two hidden pits. All the pits are 5 feet wide and 10 feet deep. Climbing out of a pit requires a DC 10 Athletics check.

Open Pits: A character can sidestep or leap over an open pit with a DC 5 Acrobatics or Athletics check; anyone who falls into one of these pits takes 1d10 damage. Detritus covers the bottoms of the pits.

Hidden Pits: Gray leather tarpaulins covered with dirt conceal these two pits. The goblins are aware of these traps and try to trick enemies into triggering them.

2 Hidden Pits — **Level 1 Trap**
Object — XP 100 each

Detect Perception DC 19 — **Initiative** –
Immune attacks

Triggered Actions

Attack ✦ Encounter
Trigger: A creature enters the trap's square.
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Melee 1 (the triggering creature); +4 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target falls 10 feet to the bottom of the pit, taking 1d10 damage and falling prone.
Miss: The target returns to the last square it occupied and its movement ends immediately.
Effect: The pit is no longer hidden.

Countermeasures

✦ Reveal: Once the pit is detected, the covering tarp can be removed as a minor action (no skill check required).

Tactics: Vlark, the goblin hex hurler, tries to remain adjacent to at least one ally, so that he can use *lead from the rear*. He tries to catch as many enemies as possible in his *vexing cloud* and sustains the cloud as a minor action on subsequent rounds while using *blinding hex* and *stinging hex* against particularly troublesome foes.

The goblin cutters and cutthroats try to flank enemies and gain combat advantage. A goblin might also try to *bull rush* a character into a nearby pit.

Treasure: Each goblin carries 1d10 cp and 1d10 sp, and has a 1-in-6 chance of having a small gem or valuable trinket worth 50 gp.

The alcove in the northeast corner of the hexer's cave contains a shelf of alchemical concoctions, most of them foul-tasting failures. Hidden among them are two flasks of *alchemist's essence* (level 6; one releases a cloud of poison, the other a ball of fire), and three unidentifiable magical concoctions. (Roll a d6 to determine their effects once imbibed.)

⚀ The imbiber loses a healing surge.
⚁ The imbiber's hair falls out. It grows back normally.
⚂ The imbiber is blinded until he or she takes a short rest.
⚃ The imbiber is weakened until he or she takes a short rest.
⚄ The imbiber's ears transform into goblin ears for the next 24 hours.
⚅ The imbiber regains a spent healing surge and is immune to charm and fear effects for the next 24 hours.

6 Goblin Cutters — **Level 1 Minion Skirmisher**
Small natural humanoid — XP 25 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +5
AC 16, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 11 — **Perception** +1
Speed 6 — Low-light vision

Standard Actions

Short Sword (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 4 damage, or 5 damage if the goblin has combat advantage against the target.

Triggered Actions

Goblin Tactics ✦ At-Will
Trigger: A melee attack misses the goblin.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The goblin shifts 1 square.

Skills Stealth +5, Thievery +5

Str 14 (+2)	**Dex** 17 (+3)	**Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 13 (+1)	**Int** 8 (-1)	**Cha** 8 (-1)

Alignment evil — **Languages** Common, Goblin
Equipment leather armor, short sword

Goblin Hex Hurler	Level 3 Controller (Leader)
Small natural humanoid	XP 150
HP 46; **Bloodied** 23	**Initiative** +3
AC 17, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 16	**Perception** +2
Speed 6	Low-light vision
Standard Actions	
Staff (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 7 damage, and the goblin can slide the target 1 square.	
Blinding Hex ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d6 + 1 damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the goblin's next turn.	
Stinging Hex ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. Will	
Hit: The target takes 3d6 + 1 damage if it moves during its turn (save ends).	
Vexing Cloud (zone) ✦ **Encounter**	
Effect: Area burst 3 within 10. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the goblin's next turn. Enemies take a -2 penalty to attack rolls while in the zone.	
Sustain Minor: The zone persists until the end of the goblin's next turn, and the goblin can move it up to 5 squares.	
Triggered Actions	
Goblin Tactics ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: A melee attack misses the goblin.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The goblin shifts 1 square.	
Lead from the Rear ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy hits the goblin with a ranged attack.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The goblin can change the attack's target to an adjacent ally of the goblin's level or lower.	
Skills Stealth +10, Thievery +10	
Str 10 (+1) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+2)	
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 9 (+0) **Cha** 18 (+5)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin	
Equipment leather robes, staff implement	

3 Bat Swarms	Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium natural beast (swarm)	XP 125 each
HP 35; **Bloodied** 17	**Initiative** +6
AC 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 13	**Perception** +6
Speed 0, fly 10 (hover)	Darkvision
Resist half damage against melee and ranged attacks; **Vulnerable** 10 against area and close attacks	
Traits	
Hindering Swarm ✦ **Aura** 1	
Enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to melee and ranged attack rolls.	
Evasive Flight	
A flying bat swarm does not provoke opportunity attacks when it moves.	
Swarm	
The swarm can occupy the same space as another creature, and an enemy can enter its space, which is difficult terrain. The swarm cannot be pulled, pushed, or slid by melee or ranged attacks. It can squeeze through any opening that is large enough for at least one of the creatures it comprises.	
Standard Actions	
Swarm of Fangs ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage.	
Str 8 (+0) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 10 (+1)	
Con 11 (+1) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 6 (-1)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

H15. Bat Cave

Exploration Encounter or Combat Encounter
Level 1 (375 XP)

Two entrances lead into this cave: a blocked tunnel leading to area H14, and a 50-foot-high, naturally formed chimney that leads to the surface. A knotted rope is tied around a spike at the top of the chimney and hangs down to the cave floor. The goblins use the rope to enter and leave the dungeon, but only at night when the bat swarms are gone.

Monsters: 3 bat swarms. These swarms hunt at night, leaving the cave at dusk and returning shortly before dawn.

When the characters enter this area, read:
Bat guano and rubble cover the floor of this dank cave. A natural chimney in the middle of the ten-foot-high ceiling leads up toward the surface, and a knotted rope hangs from it.

A boulder blocks a 4-foot-high, 2-foot-wide exit in the south wall, which leads to area H14.

A character can climb the knotted rope without needing to make an Athletics check.

H16. Dining Hall

Exploration Encounter

This chamber is where Talther Yorn eats his meals and entertains guests (of which he has few, not surprisingly). Although he has no apprentices currently, the necromancer expects future ones to eat here as well.

When the characters enter this area, read:
This room contains a dining table and six chairs. The north, south, and east walls each have a single door.

A small room to the south contains crates and sacks of dried foodstuffs, plus casks of cheap wine and drinking water. Stacks of dishware, eating utensils, and drinking cups sit atop a small table in the northeast corner.

H17. Apprentice's Quarters

Exploration Encounter or Combat Encounter
Level 1 (31 XP)

These three rooms are side-by-side in the western wing of the dungeon. Talther recently had them furnished in expectation of taking on apprentices, although he has made little progress so far in finding worthy candidates.

Monster: 1 goblin zombie (hiding in the northernmost room).

When characters enter one of these rooms, read:
This unlit chamber contains a bed draped in bearskin, a small table, a desk, a chair, and a tall wooden wardrobe. Carved skull motifs adorn the furnishings.

A DC 21 Perception check detects a faint odor of decay in the northernmost room. The smell comes from a goblin zombie hiding in the wardrobe. It leaps out and attacks if anyone opens the door to its refuge. If the characters leave the wardrobe undisturbed, the zombie stands silently inside it and does not emerge.

Goblin Zombie	**Level 2 Minion Brute**
Small natural animate (undead)	XP 31
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +1	
AC 14, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12	**Perception** -1
Speed 5	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Grab and Gnaw ✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 3 damage, and the zombie grabs the target (escape DC 13). Until the grab ends, the target takes ongoing 5 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Deathless Hunger ✦ Encounter	
Trigger: The zombie is reduced to 0 hit points, but not by a critical hit.	
Effect (No Action): Roll a d20. On a 15 or higher, the zombie is instead reduced to 1 hit point.	
Skills Stealth +6	
Str 11 (+1) **Dex** 11 (+1) **Wis** 7 (-1)	
Con 10 (+1) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 3 (-3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

H18. Library

Exploration Encounter

During his not-so-illustrious adventuring career, Talther Yorn amassed a sizable collection of tomes from lost libraries. He keeps many of these books here, for the edification of his future apprentices.

When the characters enter this area, read:
Floor-to-ceiling bookshelves line every wall of this unlit chamber, but books fill only part of each shelf. Shrunken heads, stuffed rodents, skulls, and other ghastly bits of bric-a-brac take up the dead space between book spines. In the middle of the room stands a heavy wooden desk and a chair made of flesh pulled taut over lashed bones. A tinderbox rests atop the desk near a small mountain of unlit, half-melted candles.

The desk has three drawers, all of them empty.

Treasure: The books cover a wide variety of subjects tangentially related to necromancy, including anatomy, anthropology, spiritualism, and taxidermy. The library contains more than one hundred books, and the entire collection (which weighs a total of 150 pounds) is worth 2,500 gp to an interested buyer. The collection of oddities on the shelves is worth another 500 gp.

The desk has three drawers, two of which are empty. The bottom drawer contains an unlocked ebony coffer (worth 100 gp) containing six ghoul candles (worth 10 gp each). A ghoul candle sheds light as a normal candle, but its light is invisible to undead. Talther's gravediggers used these candles when they ventured into barrows or explored haunted battlefields at night, hoping to avoid the notice of any resident undead creatures.

H19. Necromancer's Den

Combat Encounter Level 1 (312 XP)

Hidden behind a secret door (see area H23), these two rooms contain Talther Yorn's alchemical laboratory and coffin.

Monsters: 2 goblin zombie bugsacks. When a goblin zombie bugsack is destroyed, it bursts open and releases a centipede swarm in its square.

When anyone enters the southern room, read:
This unlit room appears to be an alchemist's lab. The south wall is lined with wooden shelves containing cobwebs, flasks, and alchemical equipment. The room also contains an iron stove, a cluttered table, and two large chests. Standing in the middle of the room is a sculpted wooden lectern with an open book resting on it. Two goblin zombies, their rotten teeth bared, leap from dark corners!

When anyone opens the northern door, read:
More cobwebs fill the corners of this room, which contains only a wooden coffin. Its lid is carved in the likeness of a monstrous bat and held shut by iron clasps resembling skeletal fingers.

Bugsack: A goblin zombie bugsack is identical to a goblin zombie (see area H17) except that its *deathless hunger* power is replaced with the following triggered action.

Triggered Actions
Bugsack ✦ Encounter
Trigger: The zombie drops to 0 hit points.
Effect (No Action): The zombie bursts open, and a centipede swarm appears in its space.

Centipede Swarm	Level 2 Brute
Medium natural beast (swarm)	XP 125
HP 44; **Bloodied** 22	**Initiative** +4
AC 14, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 12	**Perception** +1
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb)	Darkvision
Resist half damage against melee and ranged attacks; **Vulnerable** 10 against area and close attacks	
Traits	
☼ **Swarm Attack ✦ Aura** 1	
Each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 3 damage plus 2 extra damage per additional centipede swarm adjacent to the enemy.	
Swarm	
The swarm can occupy the same space as another creature, and an enemy can enter its space, which is difficult terrain. The swarm cannot be pulled, pushed, or slid by melee or ranged attacks. It can squeeze through any opening that is large enough for at least one of the creatures it comprises.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Swarm of Mandibles** (poison) **✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +5 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 damage plus 1 extra damage for each additional centipede swarm adjacent to the target, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends). A creature already taking ongoing poison damage is also weakened (save ends).	
Skills Stealth +9	
Str 9 (+0) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 10 (+1)	
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 6 (-1)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

Coffin: Tiny holes in the lid allow Talther Yorn to enter the coffin in mist form. Iron clasps keep the coffin sealed, although a successful DC 21 Thievery check or Knock ritual can unlock them. Characters can also smash open the coffin (AC/Fortitude 20, Reflex 5, 50 hit points). It contains grave dirt. A splash of holy water or a ritual prayer requiring a standard action and a successful DC 21 Religion check consecrates the grave dirt, preventing Yorn from using his grave healing trait.

Lore: The book on the lectern contains Talther Yorn's meticulous notes (written in Common) about his various alchemical experiments, most of which focus on the reanimation of dead tissue and the creation of zombies by alchemical means. The pages to which the book lies open list the ingredients and instructions for creating a necromantic fluid that Yorn unimaginatively refers to as *bone juice*. According to the book, this substance can turn a living creature into an obedient zombie without the need for an animation ritual. A quick read of Yorn's tome provides the following information:

- ✦ Creating or using *bone juice* is an inherently evil act.
- ✦ When *bone juice* is injected into a living subject, death comes quickly. Within an hour, the corpse reanimates as a weak-willed zombie under its creator's control.
- ✦ The *bone juice* admixture must be perfect. Many of Talther Yorn's early *bone juice* concoctions killed his subjects without reanimating them.
- ✦ The key ingredient in *bone juice* is powdered bone. Talther recently discovered that the more diseased the bone, the greater the chance that the "end result" (in other words, the zombie) will go berserk. Thus, the bones of the elderly are less desirable than the bones of the young.
- ✦ Talther's last entry reveals that he recently injected *bone juice* made from the remains of a child named Fin into a "willing" goblin subject, and the experiment was successful. The goblin is unnamed, but Talther remarks in passing that the creature has only one eye.

One-Eyed Goblin Zombie: Characters who read Talther Yorn's alchemical journal learn the next step toward ending the curse of the gray veil: They must find the one-eyed goblin zombie created from Fin's powdered remains. It isn't any of the zombies encountered here, nor is it confined to any particular room. The creature roams Yornhaven and might be anywhere, including a location the party has already explored. See "Run, Zombie, Run!" for more information.

Remains to Be Seen: Three jars of powdered bone sit on a middle shelf along the south wall. Each one is labeled with a name and a number, indicating the individual to whom the remains belonged and his or her age. (Talther Yorn obtained the information from Grygori Dilvia, who read it off the tombstones in the Baron's Hill cemetery.) None of the three jars bears Fin's name. A thorough search of the room leads to the discovery of an empty jar labeled "Fin/9" on the small table against the west wall.

Treasure: This room contains the equivalent of an *alchemist's workshop* (see *Adventurer's Vault*™ 2, page 79), plus two unlocked chests. Chest 1 contains four blocks of incense (see area H21) and five hollow gourds, each containing a *potion of spectral form* (see area G5). Chest 2 contains three sacks of bones that Talther Yorn has not yet ground to powder, all of them looted from the Baron's Hill cemetery. Hidden under the sacks is a level 7 magic item.

H20. Storeroom

Combat Encounter Level 1 (525 XP)

This innocuous storage room contains two secrets, one benign and one malevolent.

Monster: 1 skeleton crate (plus conjured skeletons), 1 centipede swarm (see area H19 for statistics).

When the characters enter this area, read:
This storage room contains a bookshelf crammed full of bound tomes, a closed cabinet, a wooden trunk, a barrel stuffed with torches, and a crate.

A successful DC 21 Arcana check made to detect the presence of magic reveals a necromantic aura around the crate, which stands against the north wall. Nothing else in the room is magical or remarkable.

Skeleton	Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP –
HP 45; **Bloodied** 22	**Initiative** +6
AC 19, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15	**Perception** +3
Speed 8, climb 4	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant	
Traits	
Speed of the Dead	
The skeleton gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals 1d6 extra damage on opportunity attacks.	
Standard Actions	
⨺ **Longsword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the skeleton's next turn.	
Str 15 (+3) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)	
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 3 (-3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	
Equipment longsword	

The bookshelf contains 30 blank journals (worth 5 gp each), which Talther Yorn intends to share with future apprentices. The cabinet contains blank scrolls, fresh quills, jars of ink, and 150 gp worth of common ritual components. The wooden trunk holds empty flasks and gourds, perfect for containing potions and elixirs.

Barrel of Centipedes: The barrel contains a centipede swarm that Talther Yorn plans to coax into another one of his goblin zombies to create a goblin zombie bugsack. Any character who opens the barrel can, with a successful DC 13 Dexterity check, replace the lid before the swarm escapes.

Secret Door: A secret door in the north wall pushes outward to reveal a dusty L-shaped corridor leading to area H21.

Skeleton Crate: The crate is a horrible arcane construct called a skeleton crate. Although it has no effective attacks of its own, it disgorges skeletons to slay its enemies. The crate can have no more than two skeletons active at once.

Skeleton Crate	Level 3 Elite Lurker
Medium natural animate	XP 400
HP 68; **Bloodied** 34	**Initiative** +5
AC 19, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 17	**Perception** +1
Speed 0	Tremorsense 5
Immune disease, poison; **Vulnerable** 5 fire	
Traits	
Crate Form	
The crate cannot make basic attacks or manipulate objects. All melee attacks against the crate are made with combat advantage.	
Hide in Plain Sight	
When the crate is first encountered, a creature must succeed on a DC 21 Perception check to discern it is a creature rather than an object.	
Standard Actions	
Conjure Skeleton ✦ At-Will	
Effect: The crate disgorges a skeleton, which appears in the nearest unoccupied square and acts immediately after the crate in the initiative order. Such a skeleton cannot move more than 10 squares from the crate and disappears when it drops to 0 hit points or at the end of the encounter.	
Special: The crate can have up to three skeletons disgorged at a time. Such skeletons are worth no XP.	
Move Actions	
Crate Hop ✦ At-Will	
Effect: The crate shifts 1 square and takes 1d6 damage.	
Str 10 (+1) **Dex** 11 (+1) **Wis** 10 (+1)	
Con 10 (+1) **Int** 7 (-1) **Cha** 3 (-3)	
Alignment evil **Languages** –	

Tactics: The skeleton crate begins disgorging skeletons immediately upon opening, placing them between itself and its enemies. The skeletons mark enemies that they hit with their swords, hopefully drawing attacks away from the crate.

H21. Necromancer's Study

Exploration Encounter or Combat Encounter
Level 1+ (350+ XP)

This room is Talther Yorn's private study, where he communes with the spirits of the dead.

Monsters: 1+ phantom soldiers.

When the characters enter this area, read:
Intoxicating smoke hangs in the air of this square room, issuing from a pair of large stone braziers that flank a door set in the middle of the north wall. A desk, a chair, and a bookcase suggest that this room is a study.

Talther Yorn makes incense that allows him to commune with the spirits of the dead—specifically the fallen soldiers that haunt this tomb. A character who studies the incense and succeeds on a DC 21 Arcana or Religion check understands its purpose. A character who spends at least 5 minutes inhaling the incense smoke can see the faint, gray spectral forms of soldiers floating throughout the tomb. The effect lasts for 1 hour. The phantom soldiers wear helmets that resemble stylized hawk heads, gauntlets shaped like hawk talons, and capes resembling wings. They drift through the dungeon corridors and rooms as if they're on endless patrol.

Phantom Warrior: A character must be able to sense a phantom warrior to interact with it, and getting its attention requires a DC 13 Charisma check. A character can also get a phantom warrior's attention by attacking it, but doing so makes the creature visible to everyone, and it fights until destroyed. One round after combat is joined, 1d4 additional phantom warriors appear and join the battle.

A phantom warrior that senses a character's presence and hasn't been provoked into attacking the party can answer simple questions in Common. It knows the following information:

- It has been dead for decades but has no real sense of time.
- Its sworn duty is to guard the tomb of Deveric Stormtalon, the Dread Hawk, a mighty warlord blessed by the gods. The Dread Hawk won countless victories against armies of monstrous humanoids before falling in battle in the fields south of the tomb.
- The Dread Hawk's remains lie within the "Great Tomb" (area H25). The phantom soldier can lead the characters there if they want to pay their respects, but it attacks them if they try to open or otherwise desecrate the warlord's sarcophagus.
- The necromancer (Talther Yorn) has great power over the dead. He communes with the dead soldiers to learn more about the Dread Hawk and purports to admire and respect the warlord's accomplishments. The necromancer has been careful not to disturb the Dread Hawk's remains.
- The necromancer recently transformed himself into a vampire. His coffin is hidden in a secret chamber south of the Great Tomb, and the phantom warrior can lead the characters there (to area H19) if urged to do so.
- The command word to activate the magic mirror in area H22 is "Kalara."

Characters might have trouble following the phantom warrior through the tomb unless they have potions of spectral form or other ways to phase through walls, since the spectral soldier has no physical limitations on its movement.

Treasure: The desk is a glorified table without drawers. Atop it are a few reading candles in wooden candlesticks. The bookshelf contains an assortment of historical and religious texts worth 500 gp for the entire collection.

1+ Phantom Warriors	**Level 4 Soldier**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)	XP 175 each
HP 36; **Bloodied** 18	**Initiative** +7
AC 18, Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 16	**Perception** +7
Speed 0, fly 6 (hover); phasing	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
Traits	
Insubstantial	
The phantom warrior takes only half damage from any damage source except those that deal force damage.	
Phantom Tactics	
The phantom warrior has combat advantage against any enemy that has another phantom warrior adjacent to it.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Phantom Sword** (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d8 + 7 necrotic damage.	
Effect: The target is marked until the end of the phantom warrior's next turn.	
Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 16 (+5) **Wis** 11 (+2)	
Con 12 (+3) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 18 (+6)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	

H22. Yorn's Quarters

Combat Encounter Level 1 (200 XP)

When he was alive, Talther slept in this room. Now that he's a vampire, this chamber sees far less use. Despite this, Talther still keeps it well guarded.

Monster: 1 flesh tapestry.

If the characters enter from the south, read:
Dust and cobwebs suggest that this room sees little use, yet the furnishings imply that its occupant enjoys the finest possessions. A gossamer canopy hangs over a four-poster bed against the east wall. Other furnishings include a cabinet with doors of stained glass, an iron-bound wooden chest, a bookcase lined with dolls, a desk and matching chair with a tall, wood-framed mirror mounted to the wall above it, and an exquisitely crafted wardrobe with clawed feet. A handsome, embroidered rug is sprawled across the floor. In ghastly contrast, a tapestry made of stitched flesh stretches across the northern wall, hanging from an iron rod.

If the characters enter from the north, they must push past the flesh tapestry before they can see the rest of the room. The undead tapestry attacks any living creature that moves adjacent to it.

Bookcase: Talther keeps his doll collection here. The dolls are ugly things made of straw-stuffed burlap or cloth with wooden buttons for eyes and stitched mouths. The necromancer occasionally uses these dolls in rituals, "baptizing" them in the blood of prisoners or enemies so that he can torture the creatures they represent with wracking pains or horrible nightmares.

Cabinet: The cabinet contains assorted trinkets and mementos belonging to individuals or creatures whom Talther Yorn has slain over the years. The contents include a silver ring (worth 1 gp) on a shriveled, dismembered dwarf finger, a wyvern's horn, a copper locket containing a halfling woman's sketched portrait (worth 1 gp), a pair of carved ivory dice, and a bugbear chieftain's tongue. None of the items are particularly valuable.

Desk and Wardrobe: The desk contains cloth scraps, needles, and spools of thread for making dolls. The wardrobe holds nothing but a few dark robes.

Mirror and Treasure: The mirror hanging above the desk is magical and conceals a niche in the southwest wall. The mirror is held to the wall with *greater sovereign glue* (level 8; see *Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium*™, page 132). A DC 21 Strength check pries the mirror loose, but also shatters it.

If a character speaks the proper command word while looking into the mirror, his or her reflection begins to reach out of the mirror, holding in its hands the contents of the concealed compartment behind the mirror. Likewise, if an item is held within 1 foot of the mirror, the reflection reaches out, takes it, and places it inside the compartment. A character trained in Arcana can deduce the power of the mirror with a DC 21 Arcana check. Characters can either guess the command word ("Kalara") or learn it by speaking to a phantom soldier (see area H21). "Kalara" was the name of Talther Yorn's first protégé; her skeletal remains lie buried in area D.

Since becoming a vampire, Talther no longer casts a reflection and can no longer access the secret compartment behind the mirror. It contains a level 7 magic item.

Secret Door: A secret door set in the middle of the north wall leads to an L-shaped hallway containing a staircase that descends 10 feet to another secret door in the western wall of area H26.

Tapestry: Talther Yorn stitched and animated this undead creature, which tears itself free of the iron rod and flops across the floor in pursuit of prey.

Flesh Tapestry	**Level 5 Soldier**
Large natural animate (undead)	XP 200
HP 60; **Bloodied** 30	**Initiative** +5
AC 21, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16	**Perception** +7
Speed 4	Tremorsense 5
Immune disease, poison	
Traits	
Flesh Wrap	
While the tapestry is grabbing a creature, damage dealt to the tapestry is halved, and the creature it is grabbing takes an equal amount of damage.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Lash** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage.	
ǂ **Engulf** ✦ **Recharge** when the tapestry has no creature grabbed	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target is grabbed (escape DC 15). While the target is grabbed, it is blinded, restrained, and takes ongoing 10 damage, and no creature other than the tapestry has line of sight to it.	
Str 11 (+2) **Dex** 13 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+2)	
Con 12 (+3) **Int** 6 (+0) **Cha** 3 (-2)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

H23. Hall of Statues

Exploration Encounter

This well-traveled corridor connects the foyer (area H2) to the old warlord's tomb that now serves as Talther Yorn's lecture hall (area H25).

When the characters enter this area, read:
This torchlit corridor has evenly spaced alcoves lining its western and eastern walls. Within each alcove, strung with cobwebs, is a granite statue depicting a human knight wearing a stylized helm with a birdlike beak, as well as gauntlets resembling talons. Each statue clutches a stone shield and spear. Double doors are set into both ends of the hall.

The statues "guard" the way to their warlord's tomb. They are chipped and cracked with age, but not magical or extraordinary. Characters who linger in this corridor for too long might encounter one or two veteran assassins entering from the south and heading north to relieve those standing guard in area H25.

Secret Doors: Behind two of the statues are secret doors leading to areas H19 and H24.

H24. Secret Storeroom

Trap/Hazard Encounter (150 XP) and Combat Encounter Level 1 (75 XP)

Talther Yorn hides his private collection of ritual scrolls and components here. He also keeps three undead pets confined to this room.

Monsters: 3 skeletal cats.

When the characters enter this area, read:
Beyond the secret door is a ten-foot-square room bereft of dust and cobwebs. Six-foot-high shelves line the southern and eastern walls, and resting upon them are numerous ritual components and rolled-up scrolls. Two skeletal cats watch the room from the tops of the shelves, while a third crouches atop a chest on the floor. An iron key protrudes from the chest's lock.

The three skeletal cats were once Talther Yorn's living pets. They do not attack unless either the characters attack them first, or their master commands them to do so. Left to their own devices, they follow the characters wherever they go, occasionally getting underfoot while remaining aloof. The cats lack the ability to purr, yowl, or make other vocal sounds, but their bones and claws click eerily when they move. If a character makes any effort to befriend the skeletal cats, they might exhibit behavior that seems friendly, such as attacking a goblin zombie, fetching a thrown object, or leaping into the character's arms. This behavior hides their true loyalty to their longtime master and creator, Talther Yorn.

3 Skeletal Cats	**Level 1 Minion Skirmisher**
Tiny natural animate (undead)	XP 25 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +6
AC 15, **Fortitude** 11, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 11	**Perception** +5
Speed 8, climb 4	Darkvision
Immune disease, necrotic, poison	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 0 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 3 damage.	
Move Actions	
Scamper ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The cat shifts up to its speed, ignoring difficult terrain.	
Triggered Actions	
Grave Curse ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: An enemy within 10 squares of the cat drops the cat to 0 hit points.	
Effect (No Action): The triggering enemy gains vulnerable 5 necrotic until it takes an extended rest.	
Str 3 (-4) **Dex** 18 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+0)	
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 1 (-5) **Cha** 1 (-5)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	

Trap: Turning the iron key clockwise unlocks the chest, while turning it counterclockwise or removing it from the lock releases a cloud of poisonous gas that pours out from tiny holes in the lid. Smashing the chest open also releases the gas. The skeletal cats are immune to the poisonous vapors.

Poison Gas Chest	**Level 3 Trap**
Object	XP 150
Detect Perception DC 21	**Initiative** –
Immune attacks	
Triggered Actions	
✧ **Attack** (poison) ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: The chest is opened improperly or smashed.	
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 6 poison damage.	
Miss: Half damage.	
Effect: The trap is disarmed.	
Countermeasures	
✦ **Disarm:** Thievery DC 21 (standard action). *Success:* The trap is disarmed. *Failure (16 or less):* The trap triggers.	

Treasure: The chest contains the bleached bones of Baron Davian Ryckhar, which Talther Yorn acquired at great cost shortly after the baron died. A character who uses a Speak with Dead ritual on the bones learns that Ryckhar died honorably in defense of the king's crown, and that his only wish was to be laid to rest in Baron's Hill. He doesn't know why Talther Yorn would want his remains. (Some things are better left to the imagination.)

Characters searching the shelves find numerous ritual scrolls: Arcane Lock, Brew Potion, Corpse Light, Detect Secret Doors, Excavation, Knock, Magic Circle, Phantom Steed, Read Omens, Silence, Skull Watch, Speak with Dead, and Undead Servitor. Next to the ritual book rests an unlocked wooden coffer containing 250 gp worth of ritual components.

MINOR QUEST: RETURN RYCKHAR'S REMAINS

3rd-Level Minor Quest (50 XP/character)

If the characters deliver Davian Ryckhar's bones to Father Hector Yzardo in Baron's Hill, the priest sees to it that the baron receives a proper burial and eulogy.

H25. Lecture Hall

Combat Encounter Level 2 (661 XP)

Talther Yorn has taken a dead warlord's tomb and turned it into a lecture hall. Since the necromancer has no apprentices or students at present, he uses the hall for meetings with his various agents and henchmen.

Monsters: 2 veteran assassins (named Hanson Greer and Grilthas Lavarre; see "Yorn's Assassins"), 5 goblin zombies, 1 goblin zombie bugsack. The bugsack is indistinguishable from the other goblin zombies.

In addition, if the characters disturb the warlord's sarcophagus, four phantom warriors (see area H21 for statistics) phase through walls and attack.

When the characters enter this area, read:

This large chamber has a vaulted ceiling twenty feet high. Lit torches evenly spaced along the walls illuminate bas-reliefs of knights riding giant hawks into battle. Rows of wooden benches face a large dais supporting a granite sarcophagus etched with runes. The lid of the sarcophagus is flat and upon it rest two candelabra, a book, and a goblin skull. Against the north wall stands a throne of pale marble flanked by wrought-iron candlesticks bearing full sets of flaming candles. A giant mural painted on the north wall depicts dozens of jet-black skeletons clutching weapons, leaping into the air, and dancing. The mural is crudely rendered and seems at odds with the room's more majestic décor.

Two leather-clad humans and a mob of goblin zombies loiter here. They take umbrage at the intrusion.

The bas-reliefs, the dais, the sarcophagus, and the throne are all part of the warlord's original tomb; Talther Yorn added everything else after he decided to turn the giant crypt into a lecture hall. The necromancer painted the mural of skeletons on the north wall, demonstrating his limited artistic skill.

Double Doors: Two sets of double doors lead to areas H26 and H27, respectively. Both are locked (see "Features of the Dungeon").

Goblin Skull: Talther Yorn performed a Skull Watch ritual on the otherwise ordinary goblin skull atop the sarcophagus. The skull mentally alerts the necromancer whenever it sees intruders enter this room. The skull's Perception check modifier is +13 for purposes of detecting hidden characters.

Marble Throne: Any creature that sits in the throne feels as if he or she is a bird of prey soaring among the clouds. It's an exhilarating and unsettling sensation, and the land over which the creature believes itself to be flying could be anywhere in the campaign world. The throne has no other power.

Sarcophagus: The lid of the sarcophagus weighs 2,000 pounds and requires a DC 25 Strength check to push aside. The interior cavity is roughly 3 feet wide, 8 feet long, and 3 feet deep, and it contains the lacquered, well-preserved corpse of Deveric Stormtalon, the Dread Hawk. In death, the human warlord is 7 feet tall and wears a ceremonial suit of gold armor (worth 7,500 gp) with hawk motifs worked into its breastplate, greaves, and pauldrons. His face is hidden behind a golden death mask (worth 2,500 gp) shaped like a hawk's visage and set with jade eyes. Perched on his shoulder is the stuffed, preserved body of his faithful hawk companion. Clutched to the warlord's chest are two cursed swords—a longsword and a short sword—that detect as magical.

Longsword: This blade contains a malevolent spirit that tries to dominate someone who picks it up.

Short Sword: This blade stabs the first character to pick it up, then turns to dust.

Triggered Actions

Longsword (weapon)
Trigger: A creature picks up the longsword.
Attack: Melee 1 (the triggering creature); +8 vs. Will
Hit: The target is dominated (save ends). While dominated, the target attacks its nearest ally and gains a +2 bonus to all defenses.
Effect: The sword turns to dust.

Short Sword (weapon)
Trigger: A creature picks up the short sword.
Attack: Melee 1 (the triggering creature); +8 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 10 damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points or fewer, the target turns to dust.
Effect: The sword turns to dust.

Tactics: The veteran assassins and the goblin zombies attack intruders on sight. When the bugsack is destroyed, a centipede swarm spills out of it. The swarm has no allies and simply attacks the nearest creature (or creatures) to it.

The phantom warriors emerge from the walls to attack the party for disturbing the sarcophagus. They manifest as armored humans wearing helmets with a distinctive hawklike design, gauntlets resembling bird talons, and capes resembling feathered wings. They accuse the characters of being thieves and defilers, and they cannot be reasoned with.

Treasure: Each assassin carries a pouch containing 2d20 gp and 1d6 gems worth 50 gp each.

2 Veteran Assassins **Level 4 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 175 each

HP 54; **Bloodied** 27 **Initiative** +7
AC 18, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15 **Perception** +4
Speed 6

Standard Actions

Bone Longsword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 3 damage. If the target is granting combat advantage to the veteran assassin, the target takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Crossbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 3 damage.

No Escape (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Requirement: The veteran assassin must have combat advantage against the target.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 3 damage, and the target falls prone and is slowed (save ends).

Minor Actions

Flanking Step ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The veteran assassin can shift 1 square if the shift puts it in a flanking position against an enemy.

Skills Athletics +10, Bluff +8, Stealth +10
Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 17 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 14 (+4) **Int** 13 (+3) **Cha** 13 (+3)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment bone longsword, crossbow, 20 bolts

6 Goblin Zombies	Level 2 Minion Brute
Small natural animate (undead)	XP 31 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +1	
AC 14, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12	**Perception** -1
Speed 5	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Grab and Gnaw ✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 3 damage, and the zombie grabs the target (escape DC 13). Until the grab ends, the target takes ongoing 5 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Deathless Hunger ✦ Encounter	
Trigger: The zombie is reduced to 0 hit points, but not by a critical hit.	
Effect (No Action): Roll a d20. On a 15 or higher, the zombie is instead reduced to 1 hit point.	
Skills Stealth +6	
Str 11 (+1) **Dex** 11 (+1) **Wis** 7 (-1)	
Con 10 (+1) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 3 (-3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

The goblin zombie bugsack has the following power instead of *deathless hunger*:

Triggered Actions
Bugsack ✦ Encounter
Trigger: The zombie drops to 0 hit points.
Effect (No Action): The zombie bursts open, and a centipede swarm appears in its space.

H26. Ritual Chamber

Combat Encounter Level 3 (761 XP)

Talther Yorn is probably here with his zombie hulk bodyguard when the party arrives, because here is where the vampire necromancer performs most of his magical rituals. Yorn is preparing to inject a goblin with *bone juice*, which will transform it into a zombie (see area H19 for more information on this necromantic concoction).

If the skull in area H25 alerts Talther Yorn to the presence of intruders, the party cannot surprise either the necromancer or his zombies.

Monsters: Talther Yorn (vampire necromancer), 1 ogre zombie (hulking zombie), 6 goblin zombies (see area H25 for statistics).

Other Creatures: 1 goblin cutter (see area H14 for statistics).

When the characters approach this room, read:

A magic circle inscribed with a triangle dominates the floor and glows with a faint light. Torches in sconces seem to flicker with malign anticipation.

In the middle of the room, a fat undead ogre with dark writing scrawled all over its zombified flesh stares with blank, dead eyes. It's so large that its bloated head nearly rubs the ten-foot-high ceiling. Lurking in the ogre's shadow is a terrified goblin being held by six other, leering goblins with rotting flesh. One goblin zombie cracks its neck as it turns its head to determine the source of the intrusion, while another groans hungrily.

If Talther Yorn is present, add:

A gaunt, pale-fleshed man clad in dark robes steps out from behind the hulking ogre zombie. He clutches a syringe in one hand, and his other hand looks withered and useless. "You've made a terrible mistake coming here," he says in a sonorous voice. "Your last mistake."

Talther Yorn has no interest in parleying with uninvited guests. Like any self-respecting necromancer, he would rather kill them and animate their corpses. To that end, he strives to dispose of the party as quickly as possible. If the characters goad him into talking about what he did with Fin's bones, he gloats that he ground the bones to powder, mixed the powder with some other ingredients, and injected the concoction into a goblin to turn it into a zombie. He knows that the goblin had only one eye, but he divulges this information only while dominated or when subjected to a Speak with Dead ritual (after he's destroyed).

One of Talther Yorn's hands is shriveled and useless—the result of a botched necromantic ritual that also killed his evil protégé, Kalara (see area D). The necromancer had hoped that becoming a vampire would rid him of the disfigurement and guilt, but so far it hasn't. As it stands, in his vampire state he no longer feels pain from the withered limb, which is better than nothing.

Talther carries a syringe that holds one injection of *bone juice*, a lethal necromantic serum that transforms its recipient into a zombie. He was planning to inject the goblin cutter with it, but he's happy to use it against an adventurer instead (see "Tactics" in this section).

Magic Circle: Before he turned himself into a vampire, Talther Yorn enchanted this circle to magically restrain undead creatures. (It was a precaution in case his undead experiments went berserk.) Characters can use the circle's power to their advantage. Gleaning the power of the circle requires a DC 14 Arcana check made as a free action.

Standard Actions
Magic Circle ✦ At-Will
Effect: A creature adjacent to the circle makes a DC 21 Arcana check. If the check succeeds, all undead creatures within the circle are restrained (save ends).

Secret Door: A secret door in the southwest corner opens outward, revealing an L-shaped hallway with a staircase leading up to area H22.

Storeroom: A door in the southeast corner opens into a 10-foot-square room containing wooden shelves of ritual components, a crate of torches, a chest filled with wax candles, and seven large burlap sacks ("body bags") containing goblin corpses. These are the remains of the goblins who didn't survive Talther Yorn's experiments.

Tactics: Talther Yorn stays close to the hulking zombie so that it reaps the benefits of his *unholy strength* aura. The necromancer avoids melee combat and prefers to invoke the necromantic curses scrawled on the hulking zombie's dead flesh (see "Zombie Curses"). Talther uses *beguile* to dominate a bloodied enemy so that he can administer an injection of *bone juice*. Talther's syringe contains only one shot of the substance, but if he misses with the attack, he can try again.

Standard Action

Syringe (necrotic, weapon) ✦ **Recharge** if the attack misses
Attack: Melee 1 (one dazed, restrained, stunned, or unconscious creature); +8 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d4 + 15 necrotic damage. If the damage reduces the target to 0 hit points or fewer, the target dies and rises as a zombie shambler (*Monster Vault*™, page 295) at the start of its next turn. (A Small creature uses the goblin zombie statistics instead.) A new zombie has a 50 percent chance to be free-willed. Otherwise, it obeys its creator.

If he's low on hit points, Talther Yorn tries to *beguile* and then *bite* an enemy, allowing him to regain hit points. If the hulking zombie is destroyed and Talther is bloodied, the necromancer assumes mist form and flees to area H19, seeping under doors that stand in his way.

The zombie hulk likes to attack prone or grabbed creatures because it deals more damage to them. It also makes a free melee basic attack whenever Talther Yorn triggers one of the necromantic curses scrawled on its bloated flesh.

The goblin zombies gnaw on creatures they grab.

The goblin cutter is named Glum, and he tries to flee at the first opportunity. He poses no threat to the characters, and if escape is impossible, he helps them by attacking the nearest goblin zombie. If asked about a one-eyed goblin, Glum says he knows a goblin matching that description (see "Run, Zombie, Run!").

Treasure: Talther Yorn carries an iron skeleton key that opens all locked doors in the complex, not including the Arcane Locked doors at the main entrance (area H1), for which he doesn't need a key.

Zombie Curses: Talther Yorn's hulking zombie is a creature of considerable girth. Written in black ink across its corpulent flesh are necromantic curses that Yorn alone can invoke. Invoking one of these dire powers is a standard action, and the effects originate from the zombie.

Standard Actions

Curse of the Cold Grave (cold, necrotic) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +6 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 8 cold and necrotic damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).
Effect: The hulking zombie makes a melee basic attack as a free action.

Curse of the Dead Flesh (healing, necrotic) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +6 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage.
Effect: One undead ally in the burst regains 10 hit points, and the hulking zombie makes a melee basic attack as a free action.

Curse of the Rattled Bones (necrotic) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +6 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d8 + 8 necrotic damage, and the target gains vulnerable 5 necrotic (save ends).
Effect: The hulking zombie makes a melee basic attack as a free action.

Curse of the Shattered Spirit (fear, psychic) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +6 vs. Will
Hit: 3d6 + 6 psychic damage, and the target grants combat advantage (save ends).
Effect: The hulking zombie makes a melee basic attack as a free action.

Hulking Zombie — **Level 4 Brute**
Large natural animate (undead) — XP 175

HP 70; **Bloodied** 35 — **Initiative** +1
AC 16, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14 — **Perception** +1
Speed 4 — Darkvision
Immune disease, poison

Traits

Zombie Weakness
A critical hit automatically reduces the zombie to 0 hit points.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Slam** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 2d12 + 2 damage, or 2d12 + 8 against a prone target or one that is grabbed by another creature.

⸸ **Zombie Rush** ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The zombie charges and makes the following attack in place of a basic attack.
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +7 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d12 + 2 damage, and the zombie pushes the target 1 square and knocks it prone.

Triggered Actions

Deathless Hunger ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The zombie is reduced to 0 hit points, but not by a critical hit.
Effect (No Action): Roll a d20. On a 15 or higher, the zombie is instead reduced to 1 hit point.

Str 20 (+7)	**Dex** 8 (+1)	**Wis** 8 (+1)
Con 20 (+7)	**Int** 1 (-3)	**Cha** 3 (-2)

Alignment unaligned — **Languages** –

CAPTURED!

If the characters are defeated or surrender at any point during their exploration of Yornhaven, their captors take them to area H27, strip them of their weapons, and separate them into the three eastern cells. Depending on the size of the group, one or two characters might be thrown in with the halfling prisoners. The party's weapons are placed on the table outside while the characters await torture. Before that happens, give them a chance to escape.

Vampire Necromancer — **Level 5 Elite Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) — XP 400

HP 116; **Bloodied** 58 — **Initiative** +5
AC 19, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18 — **Perception** +9
Speed 7, climb 4 (spider climb) — Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

☼ **Unholy Strength** (necrotic) ✦ **Aura** 2
Any undead ally in the aura deals 5 extra necrotic damage.

Burned by Sunlight (radiant)
Whenever the vampire starts its turn in direct sunlight, it takes 5 radiant damage.

Grave Healing (healing)
If the vampire takes an extended rest in or on its grave dirt, it regains all of its hit points. It cannot rest while in bat form or mist form.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claw** (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 4 necrotic damage.

Undead Master ✦ At-Will
Effect: The vampire can use *claw* twice, or it can use *claw* once and allow one undead ally within 5 squares of it to make a basic attack as a free action.

⸸ **Bite** (healing) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one dazed, dominated, stunned, or unconscious creature); +8 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + 2 damage, and the vampire regains hit points equal to the damage dealt.

Beguile (charm, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature that can see the vampire); +8 vs. Will
Hit: The target is dominated (save ends), or the target can choose to take 2d8 + 6 psychic damage instead.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) ✦ At-Will (1/round)
Effect: The vampire can alter its physical form to appear as a Tiny bat or a cloud of mist. In either form, it gains a fly speed of 10 and can immediately shift up to its fly speed. In bat form, the vampire retains its *bite* and *beguile* powers, but cannot use *claw* or *undead master*. In mist form, it becomes insubstantial and cannot attack. It can retake its normal form as a minor action.

Skills Arcana +11, Bluff +11, Insight +9, Religion +11, Stealth +10

Str 14 (+4)	**Dex** 16 (+5)	**Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 10 (+2)	**Int** 18 (+6)	**Cha** 18 (+6)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common

H27. Dungeon

Combat Encounter Level 3 (775 XP including Urn Shatterskull)

Talther Yorn keeps prisoners here. Sometimes he lets his half-orc servant torture them before he kills them, but in either case, the necromancer uses their remains in fell necromantic rituals.

Monsters: 3 ghouls. If combat erupts, Urn Shatterskull (see area H28) joins the fray the following round.

Other Creatures: Wynn Shadowfoot (halfling thief), 3 halfling stouts.

When the characters enter this area, read:
Several doors lead from this torchlit dungeon chamber. Rusted shackles hang on the north wall next to two rickety chairs and a table strewn with daggers, slings, short swords, and what appears to be a small adventuring kit. A large cell enclosed by floor-to-ceiling iron bars contains a terrified female halfling cowering upon a bed of rotten straw. Next to her is a wooden waste bucket. In the middle of the cage wall is a locked, barred door. Three gray ghouls surround the cage and reach their long arms through the bars, taunting the halfling with hisses and hungry cackles.

If the characters make no attempts to hide, add:
When the halfling sees you, she screams, "Help me!" The ghouls turn toward you with hungry eyes and jagged, toothy grins.

The ghouls are the remains of three human bandits who used to perform odd jobs for Talther Yorn until they demanded a little too much money for their services. They make enough noise to attract the attention of the half-orc death mage in area H28, who appears 1 round after combat is joined. The ghouls are afraid of the half-orc and do his bidding.

Cells: The three locked doors set into the eastern wall lead to 10-foot-square cells containing straw pallets. The middle cell holds three halfling prisoners (Berry Talltale, Otto Merricamp, and Cricket Havenhill). They all work for Wynn Shadowfoot (see below) and are thrilled that someone has arrived to save them.

The cell doors have no windows or bars and are locked from the outside, but anyone with a set of thieves' tools can pick the door's lock from the inside. One can attempt to pick the lock with an improvised tool, but a -5 penalty applies to the Thievery check. See "Features of the Dungeon" for more information on locked doors.

Locked Cage: A character can pick the lock on the cage door with a DC 21 Thievery check, or smash it (AC/Fortitude 25, Reflex 5, 30 hit points, resist 10 to all damage).

The halfling prisoner is a thief and self-styled tomb-raider named Wynn Shadowfoot. She bought a very rare, very expensive treasure map that led to the entrance of the tomb and was somewhat surprised to find an evil necromancer lairing within. (Talther Yorn confiscated and burned her expensive map.)

Wynn employs four halfling stouts as cohorts, mainly to carry her adventuring gear and spot traps. Three of her cohorts are locked in the middle cell, while the fourth is being tortured in area H28.

If Wynn is set free, she gladly joins the party but demands an equal portion of the spoils. ("After all, I found this dungeon first!") If the party turns down the partnership, she might tag along anyway, just in case some "accident" or "misfortune" makes her the sole inheritor of the party's hard-won loot.

Storeroom: The 10-foot-square room to the south contains two half-empty crates of trail rations used to feed the prisoners. The shelves along the south wall are bare, but the eastern shelves are stocked with unused weapons and wooden boxes containing pieces of armor (mostly leather) and clothing. These items belonged to the goblins that were transformed into zombies and appear to be of goblin manufacture.

Table: The table has all the halflings' weapons on it, plus Wynn's adventuring kit. (The halflings are wearing their armor.)

3 Ghouls	**Level 5 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 200 each
HP 63; **Bloodied** 31	**Initiative** +8
AC 21, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 16	**Perception** +2
Speed 8, climb 4	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic	
Traits	
Weakened Paralysis	
Whenever the ghoul takes radiant damage, one creature immobilized or stunned by the ghoul can make a saving throw against one of those effects.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Claws** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
⸸ **Ghoulish Bite** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one immobilized, restrained, stunned, or unconscious creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d6 + 6 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).	
Skills Stealth +11	
Str 14 (+4) **Dex** 19 (+6) **Wis** 11 (+2)	
Con 15 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+3)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common	

Halfling Thief	**Level 2 Skirmisher**
Small natural humanoid	XP 125
HP 34; **Bloodied** 17	**Initiative** +6
AC 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 14	**Perception** +1
Speed 6	
Traits	
Nimble Reaction	
The halfling gains a +2 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d4 + 5 damage, plus 1d6 damage if the halfling has combat advantage against the target.	
Effect: The halfling can shift 1 square.	
⊕ **Throwing Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d4 + 5 damage, plus 1d6 damage if the halfling has combat advantage against the target.	
⸸ **Mobile Melee Attack** ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The halfling moves up to 4 squares, using *dagger* at any point during the move. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks from the target of the attack.	
Skills Acrobatics +9, Stealth +9, Thievery +9	
Str 12 (+2) **Dex** 16 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+1)	
Con 10 (+1) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 14 (+3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	
Equipment leather armor, 6 daggers	

3 Halfling Stouts	Level 2 Minion Skirmisher
Small natural humanoid	XP 31 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +3	
AC 16, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14	**Perception** +5
Speed 6	
Traits	
Nimble Reaction	
The halfling gains a +2 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Standard Actions	
Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage.	
Sling (weapon) ✦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10/20 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Second Chance ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: An enemy hits the stout with an attack.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The triggering enemy must reroll the attack roll and use the new result.	
Skills Acrobatics +8, Thievery +8	
Str 11 (+1) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 9 (+0)	
Con 10 (+1) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 14 (+3)	
Alignment any **Languages** Common	
Equipment leather armor, short sword, sling, 20 sling bullets	

H28. Torture Chamber

Combat Encounter Level 1 (175 XP)

This room is where Talther Yorn and his half-orc servant, Urn, interrogate prisoners—more to satisfy their sadistic pleasures than to obtain information.

Monster: Urn Shatterskull. Urn joins the ghouls in area H27 if combat erupts there.

When the characters enter this area, read:
The stench of sweat and blood fills this room, the purpose of which is eminently clear given the shackles on the walls, the coiled whips and soiled aprons on hooks, the wooden torture rack standing to the south, and the stone chopping block spattered with dry blood. Strapped to the torture rack is a male halfling who's either dead or unconscious.

Urn Shatterskull	Level 4 Controller
Medium natural humanoid, half-orc	XP 175
HP 50; **Bloodied** 25	**Initiative** +2
AC 18, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15	**Perception** +3
Speed 6	Low-light vision
Standard Actions	
Rotting Touch (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target loses necrotic resistance or immunity until the end of Urn's next turn.	
Withering Ray (necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d6 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target is slowed and takes ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends both).	
Swarm of Flies (zone) ✦ **Encounter**	
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +7 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d6 damage, and the burst creates a zone of swarming flies that lasts until the end of the encounter. A creature that starts its turn in the zone takes 5 damage and does not have line of sight to squares more than 3 squares away from it. As a minor action, Urn can move the zone up to 2 squares.	
Triggered Actions	
Death Mark (necrotic) ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: An enemy drops Urn to 0 hit points.	
Effect (No Action): The triggering enemy takes 2d6 + 11 necrotic damage.	
Skills Arcana +10, Intimidate +6	
Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 11 (+2) **Wis** 13 (+3)	
Con 10 (+2) **Int** 16 (+5) **Cha** 9 (+1)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Giant	
Equipment robes, mask	

The halfling strapped to the rack is dead. A DC 9 Heal check reveals that he died minutes ago as a result of the torture inflicted upon him. One of the halflings in area H27 can inform the characters that the dead halfling's name was Wesley Glibwhistle.

Wesley's torturer is a vile half-orc death mage named Urn Shatterskull. He has been Talther Yorn's loyal servant for more than fifteen years. Urn revels in the suffering of others, and he has a mask fetish. In this encounter, he wears a leather half-mask with wolf fangs and a mane of crow feathers. He also has other masks hanging on the walls of his quarters (area H8).

Tactics: Urn tries to catch as many enemies as possible in his *swarm of flies*, moving it around on subsequent rounds as needed. He likes to use rotting touch, then retreat and use *withering ray* against the same target. When Urn drops to 0 hit points, his *death mark* triggers.

Treasure: Urn carries a bone key that he modeled after Talther Yorn's skeleton key. It opens all of the locked doors in the dungeon except the Arcane Locked doors at the main entrance (area H1). This chamber contains nothing else of value.

H29. Secret Treasure Vault

Trap/Hazard Encounter (250 XP) and Combat Encounter Level 5 (1,050 XP)

A secret door conceals this room, and with good reason: Talther Yorn hides his loot here. He has also left a nasty surprise here for would-be thieves.

Traps/Hazards: 2 glyphs of warding (lightning).

Monsters: 6 green slimes.

When the characters peer inside, read:
Cobwebs abound in this secret room, which appears to be some kind of vault with a stucco ceiling and walls. Two treasure chests with iron bands and fittings rest side-by-side against the south wall, and a wooden rack mounted to the western wall holds several pieces of resplendent apparel, including a cloak, a pair of boots, a pair of gloves, and a circlet. Hanging from the ceiling by short iron rods are six one-foot-diameter globes filled with viscid gray liquid.

Talther Yorn amassed a respectable amount of treasure during his brief adventuring career, and he keeps much of it here.

Glass Globes: Each globe contains a single green slime, but the gray veil makes it difficult to determine

the exact nature of the substance. A character must succeed on a DC 14 Dungeoneering or Nature check to identify the "gray ooze" as green slime. The iron rods attached to the globes connect to a web of copper wires that run across the ceiling, down the south wall, and up the backs of the two chests. Characters have no chance to spot the wires unless they chip away their stucco covering on the ceiling and walls.

Smashing a glass globe (AC 15, Fortitude/Reflex 5, 8 hit points, vulnerable 5 thunder) causes the slime within to fall into the square below. Characters have line of sight but not line of effect to the green slimes while they are contained within the globes.

A character can detach a globe from the iron rod suspending it with a DC 21 Thievery check. If the check fails by 5 or more, the globe shatters, and the green slime inside makes a melee basic attack as a free action against the character.

Chests: The two chests are unlocked but stuck to the floor with *greater sovereign glue* (level 8; see *Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium*, page 132). Prying one loose requires a DC 21 Strength check. Characters who inspect the chests can try to detect the glyph of warding traps placed upon them. Touching either chest triggers its glyph and also sends a jolt of electricity through the system of copper wires and iron rods connecting the chest to the glass globes. The jolt is enough to shatter the globes, releasing the green slimes without harming them. The slimes expand as they fall to jointly cover the entire room, and each slime can use engulf as a free action against any creature directly underneath it.

2 Glyphs of Warding (Lightning)	**Level 2 Trap**
Object	XP 125 each
Detect Arcana or Perception DC 15	**Initiative** –
Immune attacks	
Triggered Actions	
Attack (lightning)	
Trigger: A creature touches the object bearing the glyph.	
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 3 (creatures in the burst); +5 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d6 + 3 lightning damage.	
Special: Once the glyph is triggered, it disappears and cannot be triggered again.	
Countermeasures	
✦ **Disable:** Thievery DC 15 (standard action). *Requirement:* The character must be adjacent to the glyph. *Success:* The character disables the glyph. *Failure (14 or lower):* The glyph triggers.	

Treasure: Chest 1 is filled to the brim with coins (2,500 cp, 1,000 sp, and 775 gp). Chest 2 contains a desiccated, severed dwarf hand resting palm-down on a black satin pillow. The withered hand wears three gem-studded gold rings (worth 250 gp each) and has an elaborate scar on its palm that appears to be a treasure map. Where the map leads is beyond the scope of this adventure, but see "Concluding the Adventure."

The rack on the western wall holds a complete magic item set called Resplendent Finery (see *Adventurer's Vault 2*, page 104). The set includes resplendent gloves (level 5), *resplendent boots*, a *resplendent circlet*, and a *+2 resplendent cloak*.

Run, Zombie, Run!

Characters who question Talther Yorn or find his research in area H19 can discover what happened to Fin's remains. The necromancer ground the young boy's bones into powder and used the powder as an ingredient in the bone juice that transformed a helpless one-eyed goblin into a goblin zombie. Once the characters have the information they need, they must find this one-eyed zombie and bury it—dead or undead—in Fin's grave.

6 Green Slimes	**Level 4 Lurker**
Medium natural beast (blind, ooze)	XP 175 each
HP 47; **Bloodied** 23	**Initiative** +9
AC 18, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 14	**Perception** +2
Speed 4, climb 4	Blindsight 10
Traits	
Ooze	
While squeezing, the ooze moves at full speed rather than half speed, it doesn't take the -5 penalty to attack rolls, and it doesn't grant combat advantage for squeezing.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Slam** (acid) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 5 acid damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).	
⊕ **Engulf** (acid) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d6 + 3 acid damage, and the slime grabs the target (escape DC 18). Until the grab ends, the target takes ongoing 10 acid damage. Attacks that hit the slime deal half damage to the slime and half damage to a single creature grabbed by the slime.	
Skills Stealth +10	
Str 11 (+2) **Dex** 16 (+5) **Wis** 11 (+2)	
Con 17 (+5) **Int** 1 (-3) **Cha** 1 (-3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

The one-eyed goblin zombie doesn't stay in any specific location. Ever since his transformation, he's been wandering around Yornhaven, doing his best to stay out of sight and finding clever places to hide. Perhaps this wandering is a strange side-effect of having a young boy's powdered bones animating him, but it's not a trait shared by the other goblin zombies.

If the characters question Glum, the goblin in area H26, or interrogate a captured goblin from area H13 or H14, they can learn that the one-eyed goblin's name was Blink. Years ago, a scorpion stung Blink in the eye, and he survived only because another quick-thinking goblin bit out his eye before the poison could kill him. Blink's savior then accidentally swallowed the eye and died.

MAKING THINGS HARDER

It's unlikely that characters will be able to take very many short rests in Yornhaven (areas H1–H29), which is why only a few encounters are above the party's level. If you want to make the dungeon harder, though, have more enemies show up. For example, another necromancer might arrive at Yornhaven with his or her entourage to meet with Talther on some private matter, or a group of brigands might show up with a delivery for Severine (area H10).

The search for Blink, the one-eyed goblin zombie, begins with you determining his starting location. You can choose any room or corridor in Yornhaven. Blink is never in one place for very long. If the characters have left a trail of corpses in their wake, Blink is smart enough (just barely) to realize that it's not safe for zombies to be walking around in plain sight.

Blink's goal is to leave the dungeon. The only exit that he (dimly) recalls is the natural chimney in area H15, but he's not smart enough to remember how to get there (assuming he's not there already). He can't open the main entrance doors by himself, but if the characters open them and leave them open, he might escape that way as well.

Skill Challenge: Find Blink

Skill Challenge Level 4 (875 XP)

You do not need to run this encounter as a skill challenge if the players seem interested in scouring the dungeon for signs of the one-eyed goblin zombie. If your players are happier making skill checks to locate the little bugger, then this challenge is for them.

First, determine how many player characters are actively involved in the search for Blink. Apply a bonus or penalty to all skill checks made as part of this challenge based on the number of PCs who are actively involved: -5 for one character, -2 for two characters, no modifier for three characters, +1 for four characters, or +2 for five or more characters. The modifiers represent the ease or difficulty with which Blink can slip through the party's dragnet.

Second, have the PCs roll initiative. Each player, on his or her character's turn, can choose to aid another character (using the Aid Another rule; see *Rules Compendium*, page 128) or choose a primary skill from the selection below and make a skill check. (If a player can think of a creative use of another skill not on the list, make a judgment call as to whether that skill can be of use or not.) A failed check counts as one failure, while a successful skill check counts as one success. If a check succeeds by 5 or more, it also cancels one failure.

Complexity: 5 (10 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Dungeoneering, Insight, Nature, Perception, Religion.

Dungeoneering (DC 14): "There are only so many places where a zombie can be."

Insight (DC 14): "If I were a goblin zombie, where would I hide?"

Intimidate (DC 14): "Have you seen a one-eyed goblin zombie shamble through here recently? Don't lie to me, or I'll hurt you." (A character must have someone or something to intimidate to make this check.)

Nature (DC 21): "Everything leaves a trail. Footprints, little bits of rotting flesh, whatever."

Perception (DC 21): "Listen! Do you smell something?"

Success: The characters find Blink wherever you think it's appropriate.

Failure: Blink escapes. Even if the characters cut off obvious avenues of escape, the goblin zombie might slip through their fingers in some other way. For example, Blink could fall down the well in area

Goblin Zombie	Level 2 Minion Brute
Small natural animate (undead)	XP 31
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +1	
AC 14, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12	**Perception** -1
Speed 5	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Grab and Gnaw ✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 3 damage, and the zombie grabs the target (escape DC 13). Until the grab ends, the target takes ongoing 5 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Deathless Hunger ✦ Encounter	
Trigger: The zombie is reduced to 0 hit points, but not by a critical hit.	
Effect (No Action): Roll a d20. On a 15 or higher, the zombie is instead reduced to 1 hit point.	
Skills Stealth +6	
Str 11 (+1) **Dex** 11 (+1) **Wis** 7 (-1)	
Con 10 (+1) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 3 (-3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

H9, or into the chasm in area H13 and be swept away by an underground stream. He might climb down the hole in one of the latrines (area H7) and hide under the reeking filth, never to be seen again (unless the characters are thorough enough to search there, gods help them). Or he might hide in the barrel of centipedes stashed in area H20 and be devoured. This possibility has the unfortunate consequence of leaving behind no remains, although the characters can still fulfill their quest by burying the gorged centipedes in Fin's grave! The possibilities are endless.

Using Rituals

Characters might use rituals to help them locate or track Blink, in which case the skill challenge might prove unnecessary depending on how successful the rituals are. If you are uncertain as to whether a ritual is helpful or not, you can rule that a ritual of questionable efficacy might simply grant a +1 or +2 bonus to skill checks made as part of the skill challenge.

For example, the Hand of Fate ritual conjures a magical hand that points the caster in a certain direction, but depending on where it's cast, it might not provide very precise information about Blink's whereabouts. If it helps narrow the search area, consider awarding a +1 or +2 bonus to skill checks made as part of the effort to find the goblin zombie.

Roleplaying Blink

Blink, the one-eyed goblin zombie, can be roleplayed in any way you like. He might be afraid of the party and try to run away at every opportunity, or he could be a nasty little bugger who would chew through the fighter's codpiece given half a chance.

Concluding the Adventure

Once they have Blink or his corpse in custody, the characters can return to Baron's Hill and lay the goblin to rest in Fin's grave. If Blink is still animate, the characters must bind him to keep him from digging his way out. Alternatively, a holy prayer accompanied by a successful DC 14 Religion check might be enough to consecrate the ground around the entombed zombie and restrain it indefinitely.

After the goblin has been buried, read:

As the last shovelful of dirt falls on the young boy's grave, the gray grass around Fin's headstone turns a deep shade of green. Color begins to spread outward from this point, restoring wildflowers and trees to their natural beauty. As the gray veil retreats, all seems right with the world, and a quiet peace settles on the hilltop cemetery. Meanwhile, people in the village below begin to throw open their window shutters and emerge from their homes to bask in the wonder of it all.

If the characters fail to capture Blink, the gray veil persists. It's possible that another way might exist to lay Fin's spirit to rest, such as a high-level ritual, but such a solution is beyond the scope of the adventure and might involve an altogether new quest.

If the characters have not destroyed Talther Yorn, he might one day return to exact revenge. But for now, after he realizes that someone knows about his sanctuary, he has little choice but to pack up his belongings and leave the area as quickly as possible. (He's not looking to pick a fight with the locals and would rather be left alone to conduct his vile experiments.) The vampire necromancer can travel only at night. If the characters act quickly, they can intercept him before he leaves, or they can let him go and loot whatever treasure he leaves behind.

If the characters recover the treasure map written on the severed hand in area H29, someone in the village might be able to help them decipher it. Argus Grimbold, the local dwarf stonemason who carves headstones for the cemetery, or Rhuna Hallowgrog, the domineering matriarch of a local family of dwarves, might know to whom the severed hand once belonged—a famous dwarf adventurer or infamous dwarf brigand, perhaps. Ultimately, such details are for you to decide, but how hideously fitting it would be for a severed hand to point the characters toward their next grand adventure!

About the Author

Chris Perkins was poring over old black-and-white issues of *Dungeon* magazine when the idea of the "gray veil" konked him on the head. An adventure set in a place where everything has turned shades of gray is pretty weird, but Chris adds: "If you like swarms, undead, or swarms of undead, this adventure's for you."

Beyond the Crystal Cave

A D&D® adventure for 1st-level characters

By Steve Townshend

Illustrations by Alexey Aparin, Steve Ellis, Jeremy Jarvis, Jason Juta, Milivoj Ćeran, and Ben Wootten,
Cartography by Jason A. Engle

Foreword

If the title of this adventure rings a bell, then you might have a recent memory of *Beyond the Crystal Cave*—and yes, this is the adventure you remember from 2011, when it was part of the Dungeons & Dragons Encounters™ program, now packaged as a *Dungeon* magazine feature.

If your familiarity with *Beyond the Crystal Cave* goes back farther than a few months, then you're either a grizzled veteran of the game or a big fan of D&D history, or both. For more about how *Beyond the Crystal Cave* became part of that history, turn to the afterword on page 122.

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Adventure Background

For a year, unnatural winds and mists have battered the area around the town of Crystalbrook. Worse, bizarre blue-skinned fey creatures have emerged from the fog to pillage and murder. Townsfolk blame these misfortunes on the fey of the nearby Sildaine Forest. The fey, who also suffer, claim innocence, faulting Crystalbrook's people for hidden black magic that has attracted the wrath of primal spirits.

Problems between the townsfolk and the fey continue to escalate. Crystalbrook's warriors trespass into the forest to hunt game and the mist monsters, but such intrusions lead inevitably to clashes with elf forest wardens. Townspeople have bullied and cheated fey visitors. Brash fey have stolen livestock from the town's outlying farms and played harmful pranks on the townies. Sildaine elves tax caravans on routes that pass through the forest. Travelers have been harassed along nearby roads, resulting in several deaths, countless injuries, and more accusations.

The course of events changed nearly two weeks ago, when Orlando—son of Lady Anya Tamora, ruler of Crystalbrook—went missing. On the same day, an elf maiden named Juliana vanished. She happens to be the daughter of Lord Carric, chief among the Sildaine elves. Lady Tamora and Lord Carric suspect that Orlando and Juliana are lovers, although the leaders disagree on the specifics.

The loss of and search for the missing youths has taken the fire out of Lady Tamora and Lord Carric. Both recently appealed to the ruler of Sybar, a nearby city, for mediation and aid. Count Varis Sybar sees this as an opportunity to head off growing tensions that might lead the Crystalbrook and Sildaine factions to war against one another. Hoping to maintain stability in the region, he sent out a call for adventurers.

The Feywild

Unknown to Lady Tamora and her people, the wall between the Feywild and the world is thin near Crystalbrook. Local lore speaks of an oracular cavern nearby, which townsfolk and the fey call the Crystal Cave. Only the fey suspect that this cave contains a doorway into the Feywild. Neither group knows the whole truth presented in this section.

Long ago, Caerwyn, a half-human daughter of the Green Lord, the archfey Oran, fell in love with a human mage named Porpherio. This mage was the adopted son of Tiandra, the archfey known as the Summer Queen. When Caerwyn and Porpherio married, Oran and Tiandra worked together to create a magical island for their children. Upon the isle, the archfey placed a magical spring—the Fountain All Heal—which has great power. Oran and Tiandra also enchanted the island so that its beauty endures as long as their children remain true to each other.

Porpherio later linked the island to a worldly retreat in a crystal-filled cavern, the Crystal Cave. He augmented the oracle within this cave to share his bliss with the world. Then he spent his days with his wife, shaping his island's natural beauty. Caerwyn called their home Porpherio's Garden.

Despite his fey blood and the Fountain All Heal's magic, Caerwyn eventually died of old age. In grief, hoping to preserve his isle and his love, Porpherio seized his wife's soul before it could pass into shadow. With her permission, as well as that of the archfey, the mage built a tomb where his soul and Caerwyn's could sleep together forever. He then sent his soul from his body into the crypt, where his devotion to Caerwyn, and hers to him, could be quietly eternal. Through that love, the garden could remain.

Oran and Tiandra agreed to leave the island to its inhabitants. Together, they made the encircling seas treacherous. They filled the air bordering the isle with the swirling mist and cold wind of fey grief, leaving the isle itself in its endless summer. Both archfey placed wards to prevent anyone from disturbing the peace of Porpherio and Caerwyn. These wards also had the side effect of making time pass more quickly on the island than in the outside world—one day in Porpherio's Garden is one week in the world. The archfey never learned of the fey crossing in the Crystal Cave, so it remains open.

False Stewards

Soryth, a hag exiled from the eladrin city Astrazalian, recently came to Porpherio's Garden through the Crystal Cave. She brought her xivort (*Monster Manual*® 3) minions and her fiendish companion, Kalbon, with her. Once on the island, Soryth and Kalbon discovered its secrets. Upon finding the entombed souls of Porpherio and Caerwyn, Soryth sensed the ghosts' influence over the island. Hoping to use the isle's magic to exact revenge on her enemies, Soryth set about trying to take control. Eventually, she hit upon a diabolical scheme—she and Kalbon could absorb the sleeping souls without destroying them. In effect, Soryth and Kalbon intended to, as far as the laws of the island were concerned, become Porpherio and Caerwyn.

Soryth sensed the wards on the souls' tomb and knew she could not take both souls completely. To avoid setting off the strongest wards, she and Kalbon absorbed only a small part of each soul. Thus, the villains gained imperfect control over the isle. The hag learned that to complete her vile work, she needed the souls of two other lovers, one human and one fey. With such victims, Soryth could combine all four souls, absorbing enough of Caerwyn and Porpherio to command the island, with enough left over to fill the tomb with sleeping souls to fool the archfey wards.

About two months ago, in island time, Soryth used her powers and the fey crossing in the Crystal Cave to send forth dreams into the minds of suitable lovers. The breach that Soryth opened between the planes has allowed the weather around Porpherio's Garden

to leak into the world. This rampant magic has also attracted or created dangerous creatures within the Crystal Cave. Further, Soryth's xivorts have taken plenty of opportunities for mischief during their mistress's distraction.

Archfey Agents

Despite Soryth's subtlety, Oran and Tiandra have sensed their children's restless souls. Neither archfey is aware of the cause. Both dispatched agents to the island to discover what is going on. Oran sent Ragnar, a mighty verbeeg mercenary, with a contingent of Green Fey. Tiandra sent Uma, a briar witch dryad, with a coterie of Summer Fey.

Soryth and Kalbon used all their powers to sow discord between the archfey agents and throw them off the track. Nevertheless, just before the events of this adventure, Uma and Ragnar discovered the truth and attacked Soryth as she performed her ritual. The ritual's magic went wild, resulting in swapped souls, addled minds, and a curse. Orlando now carries part of Porpherio's soul, and Juliana part of Caerwyn's.

Uma, Ragnar, and their respective followers are now at odds. Each knows the other failed in a joint effort, creating friction between them. But this enmity is mixed with the hag's curse, which prevents the agents from easily taking action. Seeking a simple solution, Ragnar sent his cousin Basal to kill Orlando and unleash the souls he contains. Uma wanted no part of such a plan, so she broke her alliance with the giant. Now, only the heroics of capable newcomers can set the two archfey agents aright.

Adventure Summary

The following is a summary of each session.

Session 1: The characters arrive in Crystalbrook to find a group of xivorts has come out of the mist to trouble the town. After quelling the situation, the characters can talk to the leaders of each faction.

Session 2: The characters travel through the deep reaches of the Sildaine Forest to the Crystal Cave. The cave is not without its dangers.

Session 3: Feywild influences grow stronger as the characters venture on. The cave's magic lends life to the mud in one cavern. After overcoming mud monsters, the characters find the fey crossing.

Session 4: The characters arrive in Porpherio's Garden. When they explore the woods, they find Juliana in a clearing. From the elf maiden, and leprechauns attempting to console her, the characters learn a little about the chaos that has transpired. Then Soryth attacks, curses the characters, and kidnaps Juliana.

Session 5: To learn more and gain aid, the characters seek out one or both of the archfey agents. The party must undergo a test to gain the agent's favor.

Session 6: The characters go to find Orlando for the archfey agent they are championing. On the way, the characters encounter dangerous plants.

Session 7: When the characters find Orlando's supposed captor, the nymph reveals more of the truth of events on the island. Orlando is now safe within a palace at the center of a lake. One of Soryth's slaves attacks as the characters cross that lake.

Session 8: The characters find Orlando hidden within the palace discovered in the last session. As the characters make ready to leave the palace with Orlando, Ragnar's cousin Basal attacks.

Session 9: The characters return to discover Ragnar and Uma together. After revelations are shared, the agents reforge their alliance. They help the characters prepare for an assault on Soryth's lair. As the characters rest, the hag's lackeys attack.

Session 10: The characters enter the maze that serves as the gateway to the Palace of Spires demiplane, Soryth's lair. The maze is dangerous, and Soryth's boggle allies try to thwart intruders.

Session 11: The characters enter the walled garden of the Palace of Spires only to face more of Soryth's slaves. After solving a puzzle, the characters open the way into the palace interior.

Session 12: The characters enter the Palace of Spires but find the way barred. To proceed, they have to solve the mysteries of the palace's grand hall and make it past Kalbon.

Session 13: The characters head up to the palace roof to finally confront Soryth and save Juliana. In the end, each character gains the favor of the fey in the form of a wish from the Fountain All Heal.

Character Backgrounds

Characters created for this adventure gain access to one of the following two character backgrounds. Backgrounds were first introduced in *Player's Handbook 2*, and they confer a benefit based on the associated skill. When a player creates a character using one of these backgrounds, he or she can select one of the following background benefits:

- Gain a +2 bonus to checks with one skill associated with the background.
- Add one skill associated with the background to that character's class skills list for the purpose of choosing trained skills.

Each of these backgrounds also plays a part in how the story of the adventure unfolds.

Crystalbrooker

You grew up in Crystalbrook, a small agricultural community on the plains near the Sildaine Forest and the town's namesake, the stream known as the Crystalbrook. Familiar with the town and its troubles, you're also known as a capable individual there. You know the town's ruler, Lady Anya Tamora, and her

son, Orlando, to some degree. Lady Tamora is fair but stern, sanctioning retaliation against fey incursions and doing her best to protect her people. Orlando is brave and honest, but he has shown no interest in rulership since his father died a decade ago. He has refused involvement in any action against the Sildaine fey.

Do you know the Tamora family well? What was your job in Crystalbrook before you answered Count Varis's call? What was your reputation beyond your known competence? Do you think badly of the fey in the nearby woods? Have you or your family had trouble with the Sildaine fey? What about others you know? Have you harmed the fey in some way?

Associated Skills: Endurance, Nature.

Sildaine

You grew up in the ancient Sildaine Forest, maybe in the elven village that stands alongside the Crystalbrook as it runs through the woods. You know all too well of the area's recent troubles. The woodland realm usually provides for all, but recent events—weather, strange creatures, and incursions from the nearby town of Crystalbrook—have disturbed the tranquility of your home. Carric, Lord of the Sildaine, has established edicts to keep non-fey out of the forest and tax those passing through on the roads. But even his youngest daughter, Juliana, is among those reluctant to follow the decrees. You've always known her as determined, curious, and daring. Perhaps she knows something others don't.

How well do you know Lord Carric, his wife Myran, and his children, especially Juliana? What do you do in the Sildaine Forest? What do the other fey of the forest think of you? Why did you answer Count Varis's call? What do you think of the overbold townsfolk of Crystalbrook? Have you or any you care about had trouble with them? Did you act against the town in any way?

Associated Skills: History, Nature.

Treasure

As the characters progress, they have the opportunity to gain treasure in the form of gold pieces, valuables, and magic items.

Use the following table to determine unidentified magic items, or choose from it based on the adventuring group's needs. Numbers in parentheses indicate the source of the item, as noted below the table.

TREASURE TABLE

d20	Result
1	2 potions of healing (1, 2)
2	+1 magic armor (1, 2)
3	+1 magic weapon (1, 2)
4	+1 amulet of protection (1, 2)
5	+1 magic wand, orb, staff (1, 2)
6	+1 amulet of protection (1, 2)
7	+1 vicious weapon (1)
8	Shield of deflection (1)
9	Gauntlets of blood (1)
10	+1 magic rod (2) or +1 magic totem (3)
11	Bottled twilight (3)
12	Faerie field catalog (3)
13	Unseelie candle (3)
14	+1 wand of fear (4)
15	+1 weapon of accuracy (4)
16	+1 wintersnap armor (4)
17	Exceptional factotum helm, level 4 (4)
18	+1 weapon of speed (4)
19	+1 gloaming armor (4)
20	Roll twice more (reroll if 20 comes up again)

1. ***Heroes of the Fallen Lands***
2. ***Heroes of the Forgotten Kingdoms***
3. ***Player's Option: Heroes of the Feywild***
4. ***Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium***

Unique Items

During this adventure, the characters discover a number of unique items that are tools for advancing the narrative. To enter the Palace of Spires, for example, the characters need four keys— a shamrock, an oak leaf, a sprig of mistletoe, and the leaf of a rose. These keys are the most important of the unique items in the adventure. Make sure the party has all four when the time comes.

Session 1: The Call

The adventure begins in Sybar within Count Varis's palace. Despite their different backgrounds and loyalties, the characters have answered the count's summons. Players should know the gist of the problems on the frontier. If they don't, remind them of the facts from the first four paragraphs of the **Adventure Background,** page 64.

To start, read:
You have waited within the great hall of Count Varis's palace for a while since the nervous castellan left you with these other folk.

Prompt each player to introduce his or her character, giving the player a moment to describe the character's appearance and background. Allow the players to roleplay character interactions if they wish.

When everyone is ready to continue, read:
After an hour, the castellan returns to the hall. He seems more at ease as he says, "The count can see you now."

He leads you into a small chamber where the count, a handsome young human with numerous smile lines on his tanned face, leans over a desk covered with papers. As you enter, the count writes on a document, imprints his seal on the paper, sprinkles dust on the ink, and sets the paper aside. The count dismisses the castellan with a gesture.

Smiling warmly, the count says, "Please sit down," indicating luxurious couches and chairs opposite the desk. "I apologize for the wait. I'll never catch up on matters of state, but I have a task for you that can lighten the burden for me and everyone in this region.

"I ask you to officially represent me in the matter of the problems between the town of Crystalbrook and the fey of the Sildaine Forest. In this, you must be impartial, as I am. Use your talents to keep the peace and find the missing youths, Juliana and Orlando.

"To help ensure your success, I offer each of you fifty pieces of gold on behalf of Lady Tamora and Lord Carric. I'll double the amount upon your return. Also, take this document, which marks you as agents of Sybar in these matters. I guarantee you more wealth and honor, tokens of my thanks and admiration, if you succeed.

"To do so, my friends, you must stop the sides from fighting and return both youths alive to their parents. Each faction is likely to blame the other if you fail, leading to the possibility of open hostilities. I recommend you begin by questioning the lady and the lord."

Count Varis cares deeply for the outcome of this task, and he is genuinely impartial. His document is intended only to show Lord Carric and Lady Tamora that the characters have his blessing to help in this situation. If needed, the count reiterates the nature of the problem. Once the characters finish speaking and asking questions, Varis excuses himself, explaining that he needs to return to his work.

When the characters set out, read:
Crystalbrook is on the way from Sybar to the Sildaine Forest. As you travel toward the town, despite the normal warmth of this season, the wind grows cold. Chilly mist billows around you, dampening spirits and clothing. Crystalbrook's walls come into view eventually, promising relief from the weather.

But something is amiss. Screams emerge from the town gates, which stand open in the mist.

Continue with the **Gate Crashers** tactical encounter.

Gate Crashers

Encounter Level 2

Setup

3 xivort slashers (S)
2 xivort darters (D)
2 xivort net casters (N)
3 wounded townsfolk (T)
Wendig, local drunk (W)

When the characters reach Crystalbrook, read:
Mist pours through the town's open gate and flows over the walls. Through gaps in the fog, you see small creatures that have dark blue skin and large, orange eyes. From the bodies scattered around the plaza, it looks like the town guards held their own, but the tide turned against them.

As a bell starts to ring deeper inside the town, one of the creatures drags a net-bound citizen toward the opening in the wall. Sounds of activity come from nearby shops. Then the little monsters spot you.

All the characters, whether from Crystalbrook or Sildaine, recognize the creatures as those that have been troubling the area for months. This attack shows unusual boldness.

Characters can start outside the town along the edge of the map or in the first row of squares inside the opening. Place only the xivorts the characters can see, bringing in others as they attack. The net caster nearest the gate is bloodied and has only two nets. The darter inside the building is bloodied, and its *dream venom dart* is expended.

Tactics

The xivorts' cruelty forces them to test their new foes. If four xivorts fall, however, the rest try to withdraw.

Xivort Slashers: These xivorts attack the largest or tallest character in the party. They also like to slash those whom net casters have brought down or tied up.

Xivort Net Casters: The bloodied net caster gives up his prize once battle begins—dragging the full net slows him too much. Both net casters try to bind enemies in nets so that all xivorts have more freedom of movement and better targets.

Xivort Darters: These creatures attack and move, focusing on characters who attack from a distance rather than in melee.

Wounded Townsfolk: As combat starts, the wounded townsfolk crawl for cover. Use them for role-playing, as well as to help the characters with shouted warnings and suggestions to close the gate.

2 Xivort Darters (D) **Level 1 Artillery**
Small fey humanoid

HP 22; **Bloodied** 11 **Initiative** +2
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13 **Perception** +1
Speed 5 Darkvision

Standard Actions

Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage.

Dart (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage.

Dart Volley (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The darter uses *dart* twice.

Dream Venom Dart (poison, weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Triggered Actions

Darter's Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the darter hits it.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The darter teleports 2 squares.

Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment dagger, 4 darts

DEAD AND WOUNDED

Characters from Crystalbrook might recognize the dead and wounded here—Alek (wounded guard), Benn (dead farmer), Cassi (wounded food vendor), Mark (dead clerk), Simon (dead guard), and Willam (wounded halfling guard). Encourage the players to decide whom they know. All Crystalbrookers recognize the townie in the net as the local drunk, Wendig.

3 Xivort Slashers (S) **Level 1 Skirmisher**
Small fey humanoid

HP 26; **Bloodied** 13 **Initiative** +4
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13 **Perception** +1
Speed 5 Darkvision

Standard Actions

Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.

Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage.

Triggered Actions

Cunning Step ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the slasher is hit by an attack.
Effect (Free Action): The slasher shifts 1 square.

Shadow Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the slasher hits it.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The slasher teleports to another square adjacent to the triggering enemy.

Skills Bluff +5, Stealth +7
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment leather armor, short sword, 4 daggers

Mist

At the start of each round, roll 1d4. Until the start of the next round, mist lightly obscures an area in a burst 3 centered on the square that matches your result. Mark each area or the center of each area.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright daylight.

Fountain, Goods, and Stalls: Squares containing these features are difficult terrain.

Walls: These stone fortifications are 20 feet high (Athletics DC 20 to climb), topped with crenellated walkways. The crenellations are 3 feet high. Ladders lead up to both walkways on either side of the gate opening.

Gate: The gate is a wooden portcullis (see *Rules Compendium*, page 175), presently locked in the up position 10 feet off the ground. A creature in a gate mechanism square (marked G on the map) can unlock the mechanism by succeeding on an Athletics check or a Thievery check (DC 8 as a standard action, DC 19 as a minor action).

When both mechanisms are unlocked, the portcullis crashes down in the center of the gate opening. It can be raised again by repeating the process.

2 Xivort Net Casters (N) Small fey humanoid	**Level 1 Controller**
HP 26; **Bloodied** 13	**Initiative** +3
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13	**Perception** +1
Speed 5	Darkvision
Traits	
Cruel Slasher	
The net caster gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls against prone, immobilized, slowed, or restrained enemies.	
Standard Actions	
Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.	
Net (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Area burst 1 within 5 (creatures in burst); +5 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target is restrained (save ends).	
Minor Actions	
Bolas (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +5 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target falls prone and cannot stand up until the end of the net caster's next turn.	
Triggered Actions	
Shadow Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the net caster hits it.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The net caster teleports to another square adjacent to the triggering enemy.	
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+1)	
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment leather armor, short sword, 2 bolas, 4 nets	

A creature that makes a successful DC 21 Strength check as a standard action can raise the portcullis with brute force, but it stays up only as long as the creature holding it continues to make successful Strength checks each round.

Buildings: The structures to the north and south of the plaza are enclosed (the walls of the buildings are blocking terrain). The wall of a building can be climbed with a DC 20 Athletics check (the roofs are 10 feet above the ground). Mist does not extend inside the buildings.

Conclusion

When the battle is over, read:

Surviving townsfolk cheer or relax with groans of pain. Wendig struggles free, tripping over the net as he stands.

"Thanksh!" he says, stumbling forward with alcohol-tinged breath preceding him. "We're lucky you came. I bet those crittersh were going to eat me!"

Xivorts: If the characters capture any xivorts, the creatures can be cajoled (Intimidate DC 12) into revealing that their mistress let them run free after she went "beyond the Crystal Cave." They call their mistress "Soryth, the Dream Queen." Other xivorts went with her and "Kalbon, the Horned King."

Guards: Soldiers arrive from farther inside the town. They begin to clean up and finish off any living xivorts. One of them, Sheriff Brandis, tells Wendig to lead the characters to **House Tamora**.

House Tamora

When the characters approach the manor, read:

When you approach the gates of Tamora Manor, two burly guards in chainmail cross halberds to stop you.

Wendig says, "These folksh're here to shee Lady Tamora, and you besht let 'em pass. They killed that bunch of crittersh at the gate."

The guards look you over and relax. "Still need to know your business," says one.

When the characters introduce themselves, the guards react better to non-fey and town natives. Wendig's favorable report and the count's official document convince the guards to take the characters to see Lady Tamora in the manor's great hall. Despite Wendig's desires, the guards leave him behind at the manor gate unless the characters want him along.

Lady Tamora

Lady Anya Tamora is a strong, direct ruler who is accustomed to having her way. She is refined but fiery, and she is wary of fey characters in the party. But the lady is mostly worried about her son, and she is pleased the characters have come to find him and thwarted the xivort attack. Orlando is the last heir of the Tamora line. That fact and her motherly love mean that Lady Tamora sees his importance to Crystalbrook as beyond measure. In conversation, Lady Tamora reveals the following information.

- Orlando used to go out courting most nights. Lady Tamora could tell her son was in love.
- Orlando doesn't have a mean or vindictive bone in his body. He's a young dreamer with visions of adventure, rather than duty, in his head.
- Lady Tamora discovered a note in Orlando's room, which she gives to the characters. The note reads:

  Dearest Orlando, do not fear. No matter what the trouble between our people, I am yours. We can go to a place in the forest my father once told me of—a cavern of crystal where it is said that wishes are granted to the purest of heart. There can be none purer than ours. Meet me tonight, and we shall go to the Crystal Cave and away from here forever. –J
- Lady Tamora is sure that "J" stands for Juliana. Despite her current accord with Lord Carric, the lady believes the fey used Juliana to lure Orlando into a trap. She thinks they plan to hold Orlando hostage for ransom or some worse nefarious purpose.
- Tamora has heard tales of the Crystal Cave. Once, the barbarians of this area traveled to the cave to use its oracular powers. Crystalbrookers now consider it a perilous place in fey territory. When she found the letter, though, the lady sent a party to search for Orlando near the Crystal Cave, but the searchers never returned. (She knows nothing of Soryth and her cohorts.)
- Tamora gives the party one *potion of healing* as a reward for volunteering to find Orlando.

When the characters are finished with Lady Tamora, they still need to see the **Sildaine Lord**.

Sildaine Lord

As the characters head into the woods, read:
Even among the trees of the Sildaine Forest, cold wind and mist make travel uncomfortable. Suddenly, a dozen elves emerge from the woods, some with bows in hand, others with hands on sword hilts.

"What are you doing here?" asks an armored female elf.

Again, the characters have to explain themselves. These forest wardens react better to and prefer to speak with fey characters. They are forceful and severe toward non-fey. The count's document convinces the wardens to take the characters to Lord Carric. All the wardens escort the party.

When the characters arrive, read:
Eventually you arrive at an elegant village along a wide creek. Wind has been unkind to parts of the settlement, but it retains its fey beauty. Your escorts take you aloft among buildings built in the trees. From a graceful home slightly larger than others emerges a tall elf with long green robes and a dour expression. At the explanation from your guides, his expression softens.

"I am Carric, Lord of the Sildaine," says the elf. "How can I help you?"

Carric is traditional, polite, and gracious, but he has less patience for non-fey characters. Like Lady Tamora, he is grateful that Count Varis sent the characters to help find Juliana. In conversation, he reveals the following information.

- Weeks before the youths disappeared, Juliana was behaving strangely, making up reasons to travel in the woods alone. Her thoughts were far away.
- Forest wardens saw Orlando and Juliana together near the woodland verge. Carric questioned his daughter, but she remained silent and defiant.
- Carric thought Juliana was warming to him when she asked him to recount legends of the Crystal Cave he used to tell her when she was younger. Now Carric believes Juliana might have gone to the cave in search of fairy tales. If the characters show him the note to Orlando, Carric realizes that Juliana might have a different purpose in mind.
- Fey of the Sildaine use the oracular powers of the cave from time to time, but the oracle is cryptic and the experience more of a novelty than anything useful. Recently, wardens and travelers have spotted dangerous creatures near the cave. No one has gone there recently. (Carric knows nothing of Soryth, Kolban, and the xivorts.)
- Carric intends to offer the characters a map showing a trail to the Crystal Cave, but he quickly discovers that his personal copy is missing. Now all but certain that Juliana has gone to the cave, he procures an older copy of the map from his scribe.
- He warns the party that he suspects the cave contains a fey crossing. Although he doesn't know where the crossing is or where it might lead, he fearfully acknowledges that Juliana might be looking for it. He suggests that the characters head for the Crystal Cave, offering one *potion of healing* as a token of assistance.

Ending the Session

When the characters prepare to head for the Crystal Cave, this session ends.

Reward

At the end of the session, each of the characters gains 200 XP.

Treasure: The characters acquired 50 gp each, as well as *potions of healing* from Lady Tamora and Lord Carric.

Session 2: Echo Cave

In the last session, the characters learned that the lovers likely fled to the legendary Crystal Cave. The pursuit begins with travel to the cave.

When you are ready to begin, read:
Following the Sildaine map, you trek through the woods for a few hours until you arrive at the cave's location. The moss-hung cavern huddles beneath a long, high slope. Flowers and undergrowth are lush here.

If the characters look for tracks outside the cave, a successful DC 12 Perception check reveals that numerous humanoids have passed through here over the past few days. Most of the tracks are those of small, clawed humanoids (xivorts). A successful DC 19 check reveals the tracks of two Medium humanoids, in shoes or boots, walking close together.

As the characters discover when they enter the cave, the place is in darkness. (The description below assumes that the characters have a light source.)

When the characters come inside the cave, read:
Beyond the hanging moss draped over the cave entrance, the passageway veers to the right a short distance before opening up into a high cavern. This cavern has an uneven floor littered with chunks of splintered rock. Stalactites hang down from high above. Two natural halls lead out of the larger cave—one to the east and the other south.

Every sound lingers here and reverberates. As you proceed, the echoing grows stronger.

Arcana (DC 12): The echoes are a magical effect of this cave.

Dungeoneering or Nature (DC 12): Air is moving out of the southern passage, but the opening to the east is still. The southern passage probably continues on. To the east is likely a dead end.

Dungeoneering (DC 19): The echoes behave very abnormally for the shape of the chamber.

Life-giving magic from the fey crossing preserved the spiritual remains of those who have died here over the ages, but Soryth's recent corruption of the area has awakened one of these remnants as an angry undead creature. This echo spirit lingers near the main cavern since it was attracted to the sounds of the original Crystalbrook search party fleeing the ooze that resides within. The echo spirit appears almost as soon as any intruders enter, but it gibbers and moans in a way that sounds like the echoes the cavern naturally produces.

If the characters want to stifle these natural echoes, they can attempt a group Stealth check (DC 12). If the check succeeds, the sounds are muted and the Perception check to hear the approach of the monsters in the tactical encounter is easier.

Before the characters investigate either of the side passages, continue with the **Cavern Dwellers** tactical encounter.

Cavern Dwellers

Encounter Level 1

Setup

1 echo spirit (E)
1 ochre jelly (O)

No monsters are visible when the heroes enter..

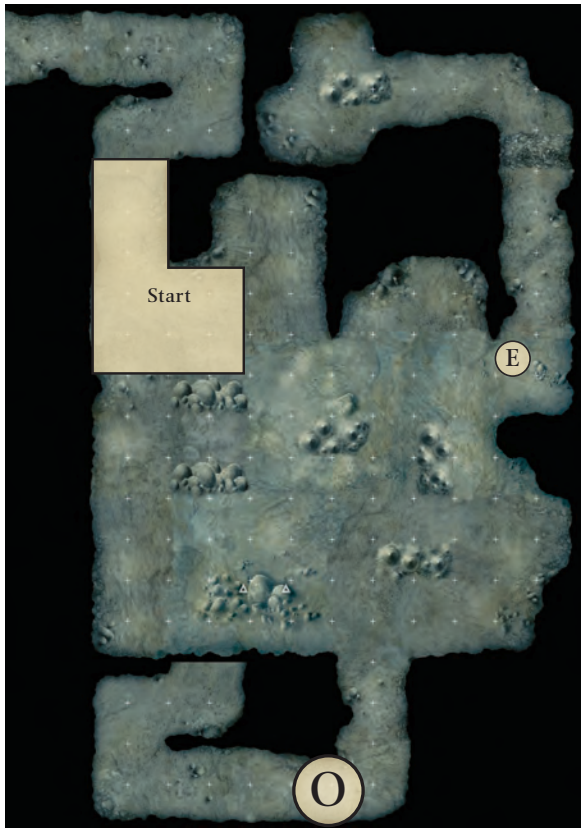
If the group Stealth check did not succeed, read:
Echoes—sonic memories of the noises you made moving through the cave—ripple in the air. Eerie reverberations mix with the echoes.

Each character can make a DC 19 Perception check. Those who succeed are not surprised.

If the group Stealth check succeeded, read:
Tiny echoes reflect your breathing and careful footfalls, but a bizarre reverberation answers from the eastern passage.

Each character can make a DC 12 Perception check. Those who succeed are not surprised.

When the echo spirit appears, read:
Vibrations from the east take form. A sinister humanoid shape glides, gibbering and moaning, into the room.



Echo Spirit (E) **Level 2 Elite Controller**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)

HP 72; **Bloodied** 36 **Initiative** +4
AC 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14 **Perception** +0
Speed 6 Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic, 10 thunder
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Insubstantial
The spirit takes half damage from all attacks except those that deal force or radiant damage. If it takes radiant damage, the spirit loses this trait until the start of its next turn.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Touch of Fear** (fear, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +5 vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + 3 psychic damage, and the spirit slides the target up to 2 squares.

⊹ **Echo Barrage** (fear, thunder) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +5 vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + 2 thunder damage, and the spirit slides the target up to 2 squares.

Minor Actions

⊕ **Spiritual Echoes** ✦ **Recharge** when the spirit uses *psychic reverberation*
Effect: Three spirit echoes appear within 10 squares of the spirit. These creatures act just after the spirit in the initiative order.

Triggered Actions

⊹ **Psychic Reverberation** (fear, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Trigger: An enemy hits the spirit with an attack.
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 10 (the triggering enemy); +5 vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + 3 psychic damage, and the spirit slides the target 1 square and knocks it prone.
Effect: The spirit becomes invisible until the end of its next turn or until it attacks.

Str 8 (+0) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 8 (+0)
Con 12 (+2) **Int** 6 (-1) **Cha** 15 (+3)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common

Tactics

Echo Spirit: This creature is crafty enough to split a party of enemies. It knows that the ochre jelly lairs to the south, so it first moves up to the nearest enemies and slides those foes toward the ooze. It then uses its powers to drive opponents into sharp stalagmites. The echo spirit is no ally of the ooze, but it aims its hatred at other sentient creatures. It fights until slain.

Spirit Echoes: The echoes stick close to the echo spirit's enemies to impede enemy movement. If the echo spirit is destroyed, the echoes act erratically until they too are destroyed.

Ochre Jelly: This ooze emerges from its lair on its initiative during the round following the surprise round. It attacks the nearest creature or the enemy that dealt it the most damage since its last turn. Like the echo spirit, the ochre jelly fights until it dies.

Ochre Jelly (O) **Level 3 Elite Brute**
Large natural beast (blind, ooze)

HP 102; **Bloodied** 51 **Initiative** +0
AC 15, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14 **Perception** +2
Speed 4, climb 4 Blindsight
Immune blinded, gaze effects; **Resist** 5 acid
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Ooze
While squeezing, the ooze moves at full speed rather than half speed, it doesn't take the -5 penalty to attack rolls, and it doesn't grant combat advantage for squeezing.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Slam** (acid) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).

Move Actions

Flowing Form ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The ochre jelly shifts up to 4 squares.

Triggered Actions

Split ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The ochre jelly becomes bloodied.
Effect (No Action): The jelly splits into two creatures, each with hit points equal to one-half its current hit points. Effects on the original ochre jelly do not apply to the second one.

Str 13 (+2) **Dex** 8 (+0) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 11 (+1) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 1 (-4)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Features of the Area

Illumination: It's dark.

Echoing Thunder: Creatures gain vulnerable 2 thunder while in this cave.

Stalagmites: Areas of stalagmites on the map are difficult terrain. A creature takes 1d4 damage if it is pulled, pushed, or slid to a square that contains these long, sharp rocks.

Rocks: Rubble on the floor is difficult terrain.

Exits: There are two exits out of the cave, other than the passage the characters came through when they entered. See "Conclusion" for where these exits lead.

Spirit Echo **Level 2 Minion Controller**
Small shadow animate (undead)

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +3
AC 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13 **Perception** +0
Speed 4 Darkvision
Immune thunder

Traits

☼ **Echo of Terror** (fear, psychic) ✦ **Aura** 1
An enemy that starts its turn in the aura takes 3 psychic damage. If an enemy that started its turn in the aura ends its turn outside the aura, the enemy takes 3 psychic damage, and the echo pulls the enemy 1 square.

Vulnerable to Banishment
If adjacent to the echo, an enemy can attempt an Arcana, Nature, or Religion check (DC 13 as a standard action; DC 20 as a minor action) against the echo. If the check succeeds, the echo takes 1 damage.

Str 3 (-3) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 8 (+0)
Con 10 (+1) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 10 (+1)
Alignment evil **Languages** –

Conclusion

After the battle concludes, the characters can take a short rest and explore the area. When they decide to investigate the southern passage, continue with **Oracle Cavern**. If they enter the eastern tunnel, go to **Haunted Cave**.

Oracle Cavern

A character who moves close enough to see the southern wall clearly can attempt a DC 12 Perception check to notice that faded chalk writing marks the wall near the opening. After that, a successful DC 19 History check reveals that the markings are ancient symbols once used by human barbarians of the Black Eagle Tribe, which roamed this area in bygone days. The markings indicate an oracle.

The ochre jelly lurked in this passage. Detritus in the entryway consists of small bits of material that an ochre jelly cannot digest. Tiny pieces of metal and smooth stone make up several small heaps upon the floor, including a pair of stone dice.

The passage slopes slightly downward, becoming ever damper as it descends. (The map on page 71 depicts only the start of the route to the cavern, ending where the passageway descends beneath the open area the characters came from.)

As the characters enter the passage, read:
Faded chalk markings line the walls for nearly fifty feet until the passage opens into a round cavern with glassy walls of black rock. On the floor at the entrance, the word "Ask" is inscribed in Common in flowing silver letters.

A natural passage slopes downward out of this cavern.

Each character can ask a single question and receive a brief answer from the oracle. Once a character has asked a question and received an answer, the oracle answers no further questions from that character for a month. Answer questions as you choose, but the answers should be vague.

Tuathan Road Whistle

During this adventure, this whistle is truly useful only during Session 10, wherein it has a special effect. At all other times within the Crystal Cave or Porpherio's Garden, the path the whistle creates leads in the direction the characters are already headed.

When the characters ask a question, read:
Your question echoes through the cavern, and then reverberates back down the passageway from which you came, finally dissipating into silence as it goes. A moment later, the sound of your voice returns from the subterranean darkness and gives an answer in words that are not yours.

This oracle cavern contains magic from the Feywild and from Porpherio. The cavern answers general questions and might provide inexpensive mundane items, or more, to help those in need. Here are some questions the cavern might answer for the characters and deeds the cavern can perform.

Did Orlando and Juliana come here? "*The lovers you speak of passed this way and traveled farther, beyond the Crystal Cave.*"

Isn't this the Crystal Cave? "*Yes, tales and lore call this the Crystal Cave. The cavern that truly owns that name is deeper within this complex.*"

What's in the true Crystal Cave? "*Beyond earth given life is the slow-falling water and the crossing into the Bright Land.*" (Arcana or History DC 8: Bright Land is another name for the Feywild.)

Who is/created the oracle? "*Porpherio, a great mage, wrote the word "Ask" on the stone, and he added to the magic here, but he did not create this oracle. This oracle simply is.*"

Lesser Tuathan Road Whistle Level 5 Common

Blowing a note on this whistle calls forth a sparkling path that leads you toward your destination.

Wondrous Item 1,000 gp

Utility Power ✦ Daily (Standard Action)

Effect: You blow the whistle while picturing in your mind a destination you have visited before. A path made of shimmering light, which only you and your allies can see, leads toward that destination until you take an extended rest.

What are the dangers of the cave? "*The magic of the cave is its danger. Passage to the Feywild is its danger. A monstrous and mindless predator once lurked within this place, as did the remnants of one dead.*" (This statement refers to the monsters the characters already fought.)

What happened to those who never returned? "*They perished here in this complex, or they went to the place beyond the Crystal Cave, beyond this oracle's sight and sense.*"

Can you help us find Orlando and Juliana? The cavern manifests a *lesser tuathan road whistle,* which appears upon the floor beside the silver letters.

Can you heal us/me? The cavern allows each character to regain 3 hit points (us) or one character to regain 10 (me).

The passage out of this cavern leads to the Cave of Mud, which the heroes will find in the next session. If the characters have not yet explored the eastern exit and want to do so, continue with **Haunted Cave**. Otherwise, go to **Ending the Session.**

Haunted Cave

The echo spirit came from this cave.

When the characters go east, read:
The eastern passage bears north quickly, and its walls grow wetter as you move onward. Beyond the rubble of a shattered flowstone curtain, the tunnel ends in a round cave.

Like sharp teeth, stalagmites jut from the floor toward an array of stalactites hanging from the ceiling.

A skeleton wearing ancient chainmail lies here, impaled upon a stalagmite. The equipment this unfortunate person once carried is ruined, but the jeweled gold amulet the corpse still wears is unsullied by age.

Heal (DC 12): The skeleton is that of a male human.

History (DC 19): Equipment remnants on the skeleton suggest that this person was a member of the Black Eagles, a barbarian tribe that once roamed this area.

The skeleton's gear is worthless. Scattered near its hip is 10 gp per character and a gem worth 20 gp per character. Around the skeleton's neck is a *+1 amulet of health*. If you prefer, the gold amulet is nonmagical and replaces the gem as a valuable treasure. You can then roll once on the Treasure Table, page 66.

This cave is a dead end.

Ending the Session

The characters eventually continue on past the oracle and deeper into the Crystal Cave.

When the characters are finished in the Oracle Cavern, read:

The passageway slopes further downward, and the floor becomes damp. From somewhere below, the sound of running water creates subtle echoes that grow louder as you proceed in their direction.

The session ends here.

Reward

Each character gains 300 XP for exploring the cavern and battling the monsters.

Treasure: Characters might have gained a *lesser tuathan road whistle* (see the sidebar). The skeleton in the **Haunted Cave** also has treasure (see above).

Session 3: The Crystal Cave

The characters ended the previous session heading down a descending passageway deeper into the cave complex. Begin this session with the **Cave of Mud** tactical encounter.

Cave of Mud

Encounter Level 1

Setup

3 mud men (M)
5 or more mud man graspers (G)

When the players are ready to start, read:

The sound of running water turns out to be coming from a stream that fills part of the cavern ahead with a muddy pool. This stream, sparkling like a ribbon of stars, flows out of the northern passageway on the opposite side of the cavern. No echoes resound here as they did in the caves above. Only an occasional droplet, falling from a stalactite, punctuates the stream's babble. In the midst of the pond stand three mounds of dried mud clustered in a triangle.

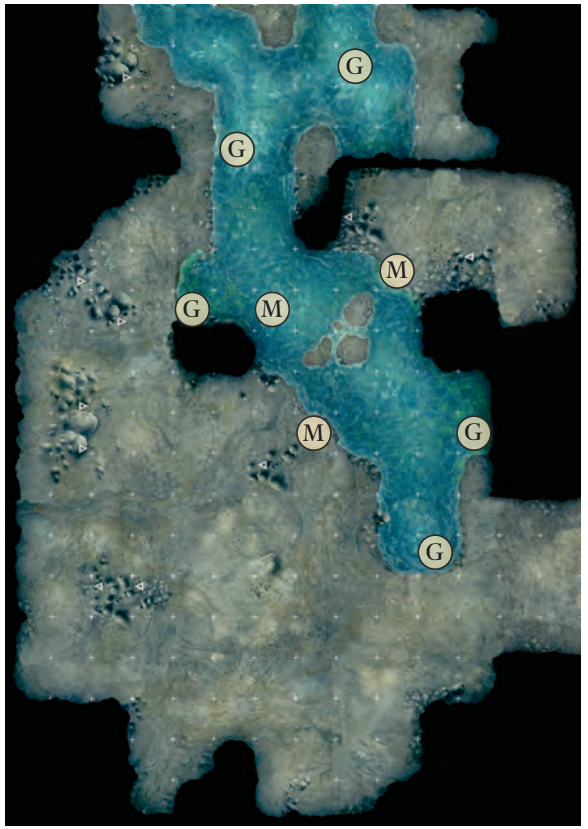
Two pale humanoid hands caked in dried mud stiffly protrude from different mounds, each hand reaching for the other. One hand is thick and masculine, the other feminine and delicate. The feminine hand wears a gold ring on its ring finger.

The three non-water squares near the middle of the map are the mounds of dried mud. Mud men doze nearby in the muddy pool, unseen. They rise to attack if anyone enters the pool or moves to a square west or north of the mounds of dried mud.

Sildaine characters know that Juliana had no gold ring, but realize she might have obtained one recently.

When the mud men attack, read:

The surface of the muddy pool sparkles much like the enchanted stream that trickles into its perimeter. Tiny points of light rise in pairs from the murk. Burbling sounds follow the appearance of the lights as humanoids of oozing mud—some small and malformed, others more like humans caked in mud—form around each pair of glittering eyes. With slopping noises, the creatures stagger forward.



Characters who succeed on a DC 11 Perception check detect some hint of movement in the mud before the mud men fully emerge. Characters who fail the check are surprised.

Tactics

Mud Men: Each mud man hurls a *mud ball* first, forcing melee characters to engage them in the mud. They rely on *amorphous body* to shift deeper into the mud, away from melee attackers, to further hinder foes with *mud ball* attacks.

Mud Man Graspers: The graspers advance and charge to use *engulf*, aiming to pin their opponents down so that their allies can freely attack from range.

Features of the Area

Illumination: It's dark.

Mud Mounds: These three mud mounds are about 3 feet high, wide and strong enough to stand on. They are difficult terrain.

Rockpiles: These squares are difficult terrain.

Pool: Shallow water and mud combine to make this wet area difficult terrain. The pool is also the source of the mud men's power. A character who makes a successful DC 12 Arcana check perceives the magic of the pool and its connection to the mud men. See "Development" for more.

Development

The magic pool infuses the mud in it, creating aggressive mud man graspers that grow into full-fledged mud men. Until all the mud men are defeated, at the start of any round in which no graspers are on the map, one grasper rises from the pool on the graspers' turn. It emerges (as a move action) in a square adjacent to the three dried mud mounds and not adjacent to any enemy.

Arcana or Nature (DC 12 standard action or DC 19 minor action): Characters who use the primal power source can make a Nature check instead of an Arcana check. A character who succeeds on this check can prevent a new grasper from emerging for 1 round.

3 Mud Men (M) **Level 2 Brute**
Medium elemental magical beast (earth, water)

HP 43; **Bloodied** 21 — **Initiative** +2
AC 14, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13 — **Perception** +7
Immune disease, poison — Darkvision
Speed 5 (swamp walk)

Traits

Relentless Assault
The mud man gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against slowed or immobilized creatures.

Standard Actions

⊕ Slam ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage.

Mud Ball ✦ At-Will
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +5 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 2 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the mud man's next turn. If the target is already slowed, it is immobilized until the end of the mud man's next turn.

Triggered Actions

Amorphous Body ✦ Encounter
Trigger: The mud man is hit by a melee attack.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The mud man shifts up to 3 squares.

Skills Stealth +7
Str 16 (+4) **Dex** 13 (+2) **Wis** 13 (+2)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 6 (-1) **Cha** 8 (+0)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Primordial

Conclusion

The characters can examine the area only after the mud men are defeated.

When the battle ends, read:

As the last of the mud creatures collapses, the concentrated eldritch energy that held their forms together disperses in the damp air. The muddy pool ceases its burbling, the glittering lights fade beneath the surface, and the pool becomes lifeless and still.

5 Mud Man Graspers (G) **Level 1 Minion Controller**
Medium elemental magical beast (earth, water)

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. — **Initiative** +1
AC 15, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 12 — **Perception** +1
Immune disease, poison — Darkvision
Speed 4 (swamp walk)

Traits

Relentless Assault
The mud man gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against slowed or immobilized creatures.

Standard Actions

⊕ Slam ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 5 damage.

⊕ Engulf ✦ At-Will
Requirement: The mud man must not have a creature grabbed.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Fortitude
Hit: The mud man grabs the target (escape DC 13), which is also pulled into the mud man's space. Until the grab ends, the target takes ongoing 5 damage and the mud man is immobilized.

Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 13 (+1) **Wis** 13 (+1)
Con 13 (+1) **Int** 3 (-4) **Cha** 8 (-1)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Primordial

At this point, the characters can take a short rest and explore further. When they decide to examine the mud mounds, continue with the following section.

Mud Mounds

A character who is adjacent to one of the mud mounds in the middle of the pool can break it open easily, revealing its contents. The two mounds that have reaching hands contain the corpses of humans from Crystalbrook, a male and a female, mummified in the mud. The other contains a halfling. These people—Kale (male human warrior), Bella (female human hunter), and Dane (male halfling "gentleman adventurer")—are members of the first search party sent to find Orlando and Juliana. Characters from Crystalbrook recognize these poor souls, and Sildaine

characters might (History DC 8). Those who recognize the bodies know that the search party had five members, but Hamish and Argus, twin brothers who are also fierce warriors, are not here.

Treasure: Each of the corpses has a backpack, flint and steel, and a torch. The humans have 15 arrows each. The halfling also carried 50 feet of hempen rope, 10 sling stones, and a set of thieves' tools. All their other gear is ruined by the mud. Items of value on the corpses include 5 gp per character, a gold ring (5 gp per character), and a *+1 magic weapon* or another item you determine by rolling on the Treasure Table, page 66. The halfling's boot also has a hidden slot in the heel (Perception DC 19 to find) containing a gem (20 gp per character). As Crystalbrookers know, Dane always was a sneaky little guy, so a Crystalbrooker receives a +2 bonus to the Perception check to search Dane.

Leaving the Area

When the characters exit this cavern through the northern passage, they can explore further. Continue with **Tunnel of Starlight**.

Tunnel of Starlight

Leading from the Cave of Mud, this tunnel turns and twists, sloping ever upward until it enters the Crystal Cave.

As the characters travel, read:
The tunnel follows a gradual slope upward, running a wild course through the darkness. A stream tumbles along a channel in the middle of the passage, the water reflecting light as if the surface is crystal rather than liquid. Soon, the cave walls begin to behave in a similar way, almost as if tiny stars were embedded in them.

Dungeoneering (DC 8): Clusters of crystal appear in increasing size and abundance in the cave walls. The "stars" on the walls are reflections in the crystals.

As the characters continue, read:
The tunnel broadens. A small, clear pool stands here, with brilliant crystal formations rising from beneath its surface. The cave and stream continue to the northeast, crystals jutting prominently from stone and water alike. A faint tinkling emanates from the crystals.

Perception (DC 8): The tinkling is actually music, each crystal's voice arranged in a slow harmony with others. This music seems to grow stronger amid larger clusters of crystal, especially farther along the tunnel.

If the characters look in the pool, they discover a silver locket with its neck strap caught around a crystal formation at the bottom. Inside is a portrait of a beautiful, brown-haired female elf whom Sildaine characters recognize as Juliana. Characters from Crystalbrook recognize the locket as Orlando's.

The lovers lost the locket while they were passing through the waterfall in the Crystal Cave, and the stream carried it here. If any doubt remained, this item confirms that the two passed this way. See "Reward" on the next page for details of the locket as treasure.

When the characters are finished exploring the tunnel, they can move on to the **Cave Entrance**.

Cave Entrance

This cavern borders the fey crossing.

When the characters enter, read:
At the end of the tunnel, the cave walls are entirely made of sparkling crystals. The glittering passageway opens up into a domed crystal cavern that reflects light in rainbow-hued patterns. Mirror images of these starlike lights reflect from the broad, placid pool in the floor. A waterfall on the far side of the cavern feeds the pool, although the torrent seems to be frozen in time. Like clear jewels, droplets of spray hang stationary in midair, and the water's suspended plunge does little to disturb the stillness of the pool.

At the nearer end of the cavern, the pool feeds the stream that runs into the tunnels below. Tinkling music, like that of tiny wind chimes, fills the air, as if the crystals are singing. Their pure notes resonate in perfect harmony with one another.

Arcana (DC 8): Magic is so strong here that the fey crossing Lord Carric mentioned is likely to be close at hand. The nearness of the crossing could explain the waterfall's state.

No exits are apparent in this large cavern. To move on, the characters must go through the waterfall. If the characters investigate further, the specifics of the phenomena in this room are delineated here.

Lights: The multicolored lights on the cavern ceiling and the surface of the pool are reflections of the characters' light sources. They move in response to the movements of the reflected light sources.
Music: The harmonious tones come from within the crystals as if the rocks are somehow alive, although they can neither speak nor move.

Pool and Waterfall: The pool is 8 inches deep, and the waterfall feeds it. Water in the pool tastes pure. At the west side of the cavern, the water in the stream flows from the pool at a natural rate as it

descends into the tunnel. Near the middle of the pool, the water flows more slowly through time, so it is as resistant as tar. From the middle of the pool to the waterfall, the water is so slow and solid that characters can walk freely upon its surface.

Arcana (DC 12): The enchanted water in the pool must flow from a place in the Feywild where time travels more slowly.

Arcana (DC 19): The state of the water does not necessarily indicate how slowly time flows beyond the waterfall, just that a difference in time flow exists between this world and the one beyond.

Nature or Perception (DC 12): The water does indeed move, but its movement is extremely slow. It takes at least a minute for a water droplet to fall an inch, and more than two hours for water to fall from the top to the bottom of the waterfall.

Perception (DC 12): A room is visible on the other side of the waterfall. Reflected light from the crystals reveals that the room is furnished.

Entering the Waterfall

To reach the room on the waterfall's far side, the characters must pass through the waterfall. Due to the slowed progress of the water, this task is harder than it first appears.

Moving Through: Objects or creatures moving at a normal pace (or faster) into the water impact it as though it is a solid object. Anyone who attempts to pass through the waterfall in this way must succeed on a DC 20 Athletics or Endurance check to do so.

The key to moving through the waterfall is to pass through it at the same rate the water is moving. Characters who move slowly through the waterfall need to succeed on a DC 8 Athletics or Endurance check to do so.

If the players toy with passing through the water but fail to discern that moving slowly is better, an Arcana check or a Nature check (DC 12) can provide this useful information.

Failure: Whenever a character fails a check to move through the waterfall, the character takes 1d10 damage and is knocked prone.

Damaging the Waterfall: If a character makes a successful weapon attack against the waterfall (AC 12, Reflex 12, Fortitude 12, Will –), the attack creates a weakness in the surface, and all checks to move through the waterfall from that point on gain a +2 bonus. Multiple hits do not increase this bonus.

Parting the Waterfall: A character who makes a successful cold or force attack against the waterfall can freeze or part a portion of it. Frozen water can be shattered, and parted water is easier to pass through. If the water is frozen or parted, all checks to move through the waterfall from that point on gain a +4 bonus. Multiple hits do not increase this bonus.

Teleportation: A character who has perceived the existence of the room beyond the waterfall can use a teleportation power to move through the waterfall into the room.

When the characters move through the waterfall, proceed to the **Observation Room.**

Observation Room

When the characters enter, read:

Carved into the rock behind the waterfall is a round room. A plush couch and a finely carved wooden table stand on an exquisite mosaic floor. The floor—upon which are the remains of a shattered crystal decanter and two glasses—depicts birds, animals, fruits, and flowers. An intricate knotwork pattern surrounds it all. This knotwork forms the root system for the fresco of an enchanted forest that sprawls across the entire back wall, broken only where a tunnel leads from the chamber.

Perception (DC 12): Wet footprints of shoe-wearing humanoids have dried here, leaving marks on the floor. Two sets of such prints lead from the room into the tunnel.

This chamber was once the place where Porpherio and Caerwyn regularly visited the world, and Juliana and Orlando passed through this room on their way into the Feywild. When the characters enter the tunnel in the fresco, go to **Ending the Session**.

Ending the Session

The session ends after the characters enter the painted tunnel.

When they do so, read:

You proceed through the tunnel in the fresco, down a passage that seems natural except for the forest painted on it. From ahead comes the scent of salt air, the whisper of crashing waves, the sound of weeping, and tiny voices rhyming.

Reward

At the end of the session, each character gains 250 XP for battling the mud men and crossing through the waterfall in the Crystal Cave.

Treasure: Orlando's locket is worth 25 gp, but the characters might later give it up. The characters also recovered some treasure in the Cave of Mud.

Session 4: Fairy Ring

At the end of the last session, the characters exited the room behind the waterfall through a mysterious tunnel. They begin this session traveling through that same passage.

As the characters proceed, read:
The woodland fresco continues on the cave walls in the tunnel beyond the Crystal Cave. But as you travel farther, rock formations like actual wooden trunks gradually replace the ones in the fresco. The space between the trunk-like rocks glows like sunlight under the trees.

Suddenly, the cave disappears in the midst of an idyllic woodland like that painted upon the cave walls. Tall trees thrive on all sides, and beams of warm sunlight penetrate the canopy above. A worn path runs alongside the same sparkling stream that was in the cave. You stand in the center of a wide circle of toadstools.

Behind you, the path follows a twisting corridor of trees toward the sound of crashing waves. On the path ahead, you hear voices and someone weeping.

Arcana (DC 12): The toadstool ring is a fairy ring, commonly found at fey crossings that lead from the world to the Feywild.

Perception (DC 12): Tracks of small humanoids and two human-sized humanoids can be seen here. Some of the older small tracks are of clawed bare feet, but the newer ones and larger ones have shoes. The older ones are reminiscent of the creatures that fought the party at Crystalbrook's gate. All the tracks lead along the path toward the weeping sound.

If the characters go back down the path toward the sound of crashing waves, continue with **Seashore**. If they head toward the weeping sound, go to **Leprechaun Woods**.

Seashore

To go to the shore, the characters retrace their steps along what they know as the tunnel that led from the Crystal Cave.

If the characters go to the shore, read:
Down the path that should be a tunnel, you come to a rocky shore on the brink of a storm-tossed sea. Wrecks of half a dozen ships are shattered upon the shoals. The path continues into a grotto, while the stream diverts into a narrow fissure in the rock. On the sea, a furious, mist-filled wind tears at the ships and the waves. Despite this, the breeze upon the shore is gentle and warm.

Nature (DC 8): The windblown mist on the sea calls to mind the unseasonable fog and wind in the world around Crystalbrook and the Sildaine Forest.

Nothing specific can be done or found here. Use the time to create the atmosphere of this strange land.

Beach: The strand is small and rocky, and apart from broken wood from the wreckage, little can be found. Although the water near the shore is gently rolling, just beyond the shoals, the sea has huge whitecaps. Wild water and high wind smashes into anyone who enters the sea beyond the shoals, tossing the character back into calm water. Such a character takes 1d10 damage from the ordeal.

Cave: This sea grotto is shallow and empty except for puddles of salt water.

Stream: The waters of the stream enter a small fissure in the rock, eventually feeding back into the Crystal Cave as the waterfall. This fissure is tiny, and a creature has to be able to breathe underwater to survive the journey. The fey crossing from the Crystal Cave is a one-way route for the characters.

When the characters finish exploring the shore, continue with **Leprechaun Woods**. If the characters have already explored the woods and experienced the tactical encounter, go to **Ending the Session,** page 81.

Leprechaun Woods

If the characters head away from the shore, they head into leprechaun territory.

When the characters go into the woods, read:
Sounds of weeping become louder as you move down the path toward a small clearing in the woods. There, an elf maiden sits in a patch of clover, sobbing into her hands. Dancing and singing around her are several short gnomes that have pale skin and red hair, as well as green hats and coats. They appear to be trying to console her, calling her "Caerwyn."

The maiden wears the garb of a Sildaine warden. When she reveals her face, it is that of Juliana. But her hair is black instead of brown.

Arcana (DC 12): The gnomelike creatures are leprechauns, rumored to be descended from gnomes. Shorter than gnomes, they thrive on mischief and possess wondrous magical powers. They are said to dwell near places where wishes and gold are close at hand.

The leprechauns are attempting to cheer Juliana with funny rhymes that they say "Caerwyn" always enjoyed. At the moment, they are focused on their merriment, and they answer the characters' queries only with riddles and nonsense.

When the characters approach, read:
Juliana notices your approach and stands up. She sniffs and wipes away her tears. Regaining her composure, she looks around in confusion.

"Hello," she says. "In hopes you are friends, I ask you: Where are we?"

Talking to Juliana

Juliana becomes nervous if the characters cannot tell her where she is. She reacts emotionally, but she is polite. Characters from the Sildaine Forest she treats with vague familiarity. This close, characters can tell she has one blue eye and one green, the latter hue being Juliana's normal color. Under questioning, Juliana might reveal the following information.

When did you arrive here? "*If I recall correctly, I left another forest last night, through a frightening cave. I was with a man . . . Porpherio! But I've slept since then, and I've had such terrible dreams.*"

Where is Orlando/Porpherio? "*My love was here with me when we awoke under the radiant gaze of a woman fairer than any I have ever seen. He ran after her, praising her beauty, abandoning me here. Has he forgotten me?*" (She starts to weep again.)

Why do the leprechauns call you Caerwyn? "*Everyone here calls me Caerwyn, since that is my name.*"

But you're Juliana, aren't you? "*Yeh . . . yes. That is another of my names . . . I think.*"

Well, which name is it? "*I don't know. Something has happened to me, hasn't it? Am I still dreaming?*"

How can we help? "*The little folk here told me that two powerful beings have come to this forest, representing the archfey. The warrior giant Ragnar makes camp on this side of the island. For some reason, he has forsworn his alliance with a dryad witch named Uma, who resides to the east. I was hoping one of these beings might help me or wake me from this dream. Maybe you'll take me? These leprechauns can't . . . or won't.*"

Talking to the Leprechauns

The leprechauns continue speaking in riddles and rhymes until convinced to do otherwise. They laugh at characters who fail to understand them. Then they encourage the characters to share a dance (Acrobatics or Athletics DC 12), joke (Bluff DC 12), rhyme or tune (Diplomacy DC 12), good story (History DC 12), or trick (Arcana or Thievery DC 12). Gnomes can understand leprechauns better, so a gnome character gains a +4 bonus to the check for this scene.

If a character tries to please, whether the attempt succeeds or fails, the leprechauns watch or listen intently, then laugh uproariously or react as you think appropriate. If even one character succeeds in entertaining the fey, they agree to talk sense to the characters.

Here are some facts the leprechauns can tell.

Where are we? "*This is an island in the Feywild seas, wild without a warden. We call it, as Caerwyn did, Porpherio's Garden.*"

Who is Caerwyn? "*Caerwyn is the daughter of the Green Lord, Oran. She and Porpherio, her husband, once ruled this garden. They have slept for very long, and now they're back, but something's wrong.*"

Wrong? "*Caerwyn's mind is part of Juliana's, and Porpherio's mind is part of Orlando's. Soryth pulled that trick, but how she did it, nobody knows.*"

Soryth? "*The Dream Queen, Soryth, now rules here. She is wicked, a hag, a master of fear. But it seems she reawakened the sleeping couple, although the agents of the archfey came to burst that bubble.*"

Who are the agents of the archfey? "*Ragnar serves the Green Lord, Caerwyn's father. Uma serves the Summer Queen, Tiandra. She is Porpherio's mother, but not by flesh, for Porpherio was one of those lucky enough to reside in a fairy creche. The two agents came when the spouses stirred in their tomb. They made war on the hag, then brought a new doom.*"

They fought the hag? "*Uma learned tricksy Soryth's tricksy trick this island to steal. Uma told Ragnar, and Ragnar grabbed his spear and his shield. He and Uma went to stop the wicked song, true, but in the end, the song got them, too. Juliana and Orlando were there, prisoners of the hag. But when the song went wrong, they slipped free of that snag.*"

Players can try to interpret the clues in the speech of the leprechauns. Skill checks can also be made to show what the characters know.

Arcana (DC 8): It sounds as if the hag was in the middle of some sort of ritual that went awry when Ragnar and Uma attacked. If Juliana was there, this magical failure might explain Juliana's condition.

Arcana or History (DC 12): Oran, the Green Lord, is lord of all Green Fey and one of the most powerful archfey alive. Moody, wild, and impulsive, he is attuned to all growing things.

Tiandra is queen of the Summer Fey, her power on a par with Oran's. She has a tempestuous romance with the Green Lord, punctuated by bitter feuds. The Summer Queen is a subtle fey of exceeding grace. She is also fond of creatures from the world.

Before the characters can ask any more questions or discuss the situation further, Soryth, who is looking for Juliana, shows up on the scene. Continue with the tactical encounter **Soryth Appears**.

Soryth Appears

Encounter Level 1

Setup

Soryth (S)
3 or 4 xivort slashers (X)
1 leprechaun (L)
Juliana (J)

Characters begin in the start area. Xivorts don't appear until the start of their turn.

When the encounter starts, read:
The leprechauns scatter as a woman in gray robes steps out from behind a pile of boulders. Half her face is the withered countenance of a crone, while the other half is beautiful and resembles Juliana.

"Thought you could escape me, Caerwyn?" she says. "Not even death can protect you from my magic. Now come, for we have a task to complete." She casts her hand in a wide arc, and suddenly Juliana stands transfixed, her eyes distant and unseeing.

"And you," says the hag, gesturing in your direction, "Stand away from my prize, or pay the price. Do not think to meddle in affairs that are not your own."

When the characters take a hostile action, or if they refuse to leave Juliana's side, the hag attacks. She remains only for a round—see her statistics, page 119, and the "Tactics" section on this page.

When a fight starts, read:
"To me, my dark little soldiers!" shouts the hag in a voice that could surely be heard from a mile away. "By the power of this island, I curse you to remain until I can deal with you! By the power of this island, I bind you to aid me!"

This last statement is aimed at a leprechaun that has not yet escaped the clearing. His eyes glaze over.

As Soryth attacks, read:
The hag gestures forcefully, the air around her filling with vibrations and tendrils of shadow. Nightmare forms begin to take shape . . .

As Soryth escapes, read:
A stiff grin spreads across the hag's face as she separates into five wisps of dark mist. These wisps encircle Juliana, who starts to disappear. Juliana awakens from her trance and struggles against the misty tendrils. She cries out and claws at the mist, ripping some of the tendrils away and casting them to the ground.

Tactics

Leprechaun: This charmed creature tries to stay out of sight and out of harm's way, favoring the use of his nonweapon attacks.

Soryth: The hag is here only to kidnap Juliana. Soryth uses *visions of desire* on the characters, then employs *dream step* to escape with Juliana, teleporting into the forest and out of sight. If she must, she spends an action point to do all this as quickly as possible without interference from the heroes.

Leprechaun (L)	**Level 2 Lurker**
Small fey humanoid, gnome	
HP 30; **Bloodied** 15	**Initiative** +8
AC 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14	**Perception** +6
Speed 5	Low-light vision
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d4 + 4 damage.	
False Presence (illusion, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Requirement: The leprechaun must be invisible.	
Effect: A false image of the leprechaun appears in an unoccupied square adjacent to an enemy to which the leprechaun is also adjacent. That enemy must make an opportunity attack against the *false presence*, using the leprechaun's defenses. If the opportunity attack misses, the enemy takes ongoing 10 psychic damage (save ends). If the opportunity attack hits, the enemy takes 10 psychic damage.	
Vanish (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The leprechaun becomes invisible until the end of its next turn or until it uses a power.	
Minor Actions	
⊰ **Useless Object** (illusion) ✦ **Recharge** if this attack misses	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +5 vs. Will	
Hit: With weapon attacks and implement attacks, the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and is weakened (save ends both).	
Triggered Actions	
Fade Away (illusion) ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: The leprechaun takes damage.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The leprechaun uses *vanish*.	
Skills Arcana +7, Bluff +8, Stealth +9, Thievery +9	
Str 8 (+0) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 10 (+1)	
Con 12 (+2) **Int** 12 (+2) **Cha** 15 (+3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment dagger	

Xivort Slashers: These creatures rush in from their positions as soon as they can. Each focuses initially on covering Soryth's escape, then attacks the nearest or weakest-looking target.

Development

Leprechaun: This creature is compelled to attack (Insight DC 8 to determine this fact if the characters do not understand it at the start). Once the leprechaun is bloodied, his eyes clear, but he keeps fighting out of fear and confusion (Insight DC 8). Diplomacy or Intimidate (DC 8) can make him back down. Note whether the characters are merciful to the charmed leprechaun. This point is important in session 12.

Reinforcements: Unless the fight is already hard on the characters, another xivort slasher arrives from behind the boulders at the start of the third round.

3 or 4 Xivort Slashers (S)	**Level 1 Skirmisher**
Small fey humanoid	
HP 26; **Bloodied** 13	**Initiative** +4
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13	**Perception** +1
Speed 5	Darkvision
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.	
⊹ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Cunning Step ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the slasher is hit by an attack.	
Effect (Free Action): The slasher shifts 1 square.	
Shadow Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the slasher hits it.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The slasher teleports to another square adjacent to the triggering enemy.	
Skills Bluff +5, Stealth +7	
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 12 (+1)	
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment leather armor, short sword, 4 daggers	

Soryth's Bloodstone: The character who has the highest passive Perception notices that the tendrils Juliana pulled away from her body have formed themselves into a polished red gem that thrums and vibrates. This is *Soryth's bloodstone* (see "Reward").

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright daylight.

Boulders: These rocks are 5 feet high (Athletics DC 8 to climb) and blocking terrain.

Debris: The fallen trees and the jumble of rubble near the boulders are difficult terrain.

Forest: The trees are 20 feet high (Athletics DC 8 to climb). Undergrowth and thick canopy render the forested area lightly obscured.

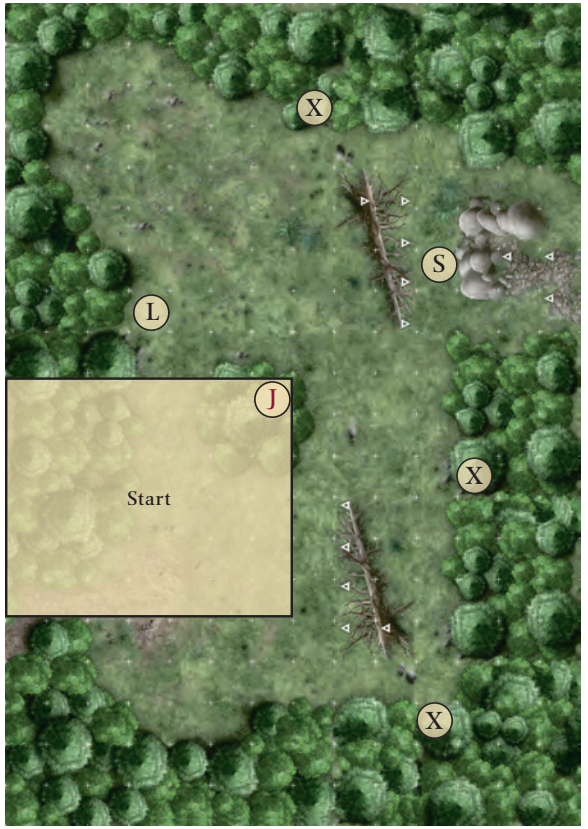
Lucky Shamrock Patch: The grove of trees in the center of the map represents a clear field of clover rather than trees. Creatures standing in the clover can reroll any natural d20 result of 1.

Ending the Session

The day fades into twilight as the characters take a short rest after the battle. Leprechauns emerge from the forest to invite the characters to hide and rest for the night. They go to a hollow tree that has chambers in and under it. There, the leprechauns tell stories, begging the characters for performances similar to what occurred in **Speaking with Leprechauns.**

The leprechauns can tell the characters anything they need to know about the archfey agents and Soryth's curse. They tell the characters that Soryth lives in a hidden castle, the Palace of Spires. To locate it, the characters need leaves as keys—one shamrock, one oak, one rose, and one mistletoe. The leprechauns provide a shamrock.

By the end of this session, the characters should know enough to decide which archfey agent they will visit, either the Green Fey or the Summer Fey.



Reward

Each character earns 250 XP for finding Juliana, interacting with the leprechauns, and encountering Soryth. Each character should now have 1,000 XP, enough to advance to level 2.

Treasure: *Soryth's bloodstone* can be affixed to a rod, a staff, or a wand, or it can be used as an orb. Thus, the characters gain a *+1 implement* of the appropriate type. The leprechauns also give the characters a shamrock and two *potions of healing*, and they teach the character who had the highest check result in the **Speaking with Leprechauns** contest the *scent of gold* fey gift (see *Player's Option: Heroes of the Feywild*).

Session 5: The Test

As the session begins, refresh the players on what has come before, especially the information about the archfey agents and the keys. The heroes awaken in the tree that serves as the leprechaun lair.

As the characters exit the tree, read:

The forest is again bathed in warm sunlight outside the leprechauns' tree. Leprechauns gather to watch you depart.

One says, "Seek one of the agents of the archfey if you wish our fate and yours to sway. But beware, neither will freely give aid. Soryth's song has addled them so they have forgotten their way. They'll test you well if they may."

The leprechauns all disappear, their giggling fading into the morning air.

Perception (DC 8): Fresh tracks from Soryth's claw-footed fey minions can be seen all over the area.

The characters know that Ragnar, agent of the Green Lord, is to the west. Uma, the Summer Queen's agent, dwells to the east. If the characters seek out the verbeeg Ragnar, continue with **Green Glen.** Interactions with the briar witch dryad Uma begin in **Summer Glade,** page 86.

Green Glen

Satyrs and wilden dwell at the edge of Ragnar's camp.

As the characters travel, read:

Morning light brightens as you move toward Ragnar's camp. A lively melody played on wood pipes guides you from afar. The smell of a campfire and roasting meat floats on the breeze. Pipe music and sounds of song continue, a chorus of raucous laughter interrupting it occasionally. Your path follows the contour of a narrow rise beyond which lies a glen where several satyrs and wilden feast and play. Posts flank the path leading into the glen, their tops wrought with wooden faces comprised of carved oak leaves.

From the edge of the glen, a satyr staggers forward, holding a flagon brimming with drink. "Newcomers!" he cheers, "Welcome!"

Nature (DC 8): The trees here are all oaks.

The satyr introduces himself as Robin, Ragnar's skald, messenger, and fool. He welcomes visitors to the glen, and he offers food and strong drink. The fey here have plenty, with five mead barrels among them.

Talking with the Green Fey

The Green Fey are a merry bunch, and they treat the characters like old friends. Half intoxicated already at this early hour, Robin and his friends cheerfully answer questions, perhaps revealing the following.

Why are Ragnar and Uma at odds? *"Ragnar knows the witch Uma caused us to fail at our great task here in this place."*

What was this task? *"We went into battle to silence a hag's foul song and rescue the soul of the Green Lord's daughter, said to sleep on this isle. But we failed. The hag and the girl were lost to us, and we found ourselves bound here by a curse the hag laid on us."*

How did Uma fail Ragnar? *"Ragnar knows. None of us saw it, but the dryad is subtle where Ragnar would be brave and forthright. Perhaps her magic failed. Her purpose was to rescue the Summer Queen's son, Porpherio, and perhaps she succeeded at our expense. If you ask me, I miss the dryads, aye, gents?"* (The fey toast and laugh.)

We saw a hag kidnap Juliana/Caerwyn. *"You saw this lady? If the hag has her, she is in the hidden Palace of Spires, accessible only through a twisted maze that we entered once but can no longer. The hag has used her powers to curse us, which bars us from it."*

What do you know of Porpherio/Orlando? *"He was with the hag when we attacked. Ragnar's cousin Basal now hunts for him in hopes of slaying him and sending his soul into shadow so the hag can't have him. He's hidden well, for sure, since Basal has yet to return with his head."*

Can we see Ragnar? *"The trouble is, friends, that Ragnar isn't the trusty sort. How's he to know you aren't in cahoots with that dryad witch and here to cause trouble? I know—I'd trust you, of course. But Ragnar'll have my hooves if I just dance you into his camp.*

"Tell you what. Cause some mischief with me. Vex Uma. I'll have a tale to tell old Ragnar, and you'll have his favor. What do you say?"

What kind of mischief? *"Uma has befriended two young unicorns. The beasts don't trust us, but with your help, we can bring them over to Ragnar's side. Then Ragnar and Uma might even make peace, and we can get back to good work and fell deeds. See, the unicorns didn't go with us when we attacked the hag. They might even know something we've forgotten. Will you do it?"*

If the characters agree, continue with **Rustling Unicorns.** The Green Fey show no hard feelings if the characters want to talk to Uma first. In this case, go to **Summer Glade**, page 86.

Rustling Unicorns

After the characters agree, read:

Robin leads the way through the woods, past a serene lake and across an ornate bridge over the enchanted stream. The woods give way to a wide meadow where two young unicorns play in grass of varying lengths. A few trees, several shrubs, and two calm pools break up the sward. At the edge of the forest, the Green Fey wait.

"If we wish to avoid war, and we do, we can go no farther," says Robin. "You must cross into Uma's territory and nab the unicorns. Sneak up or convince them you mean no harm. Then, coerce them to our cause. Oh, Uma will be so angry, she'll choke on her own branches!"

The Green Fey provide each character who wants one a lasso of silk rope. Rather than working as weapons,

these lassos are potentially useful in the upcoming skill challenges.

Skill Challenge: Approach

This challenge begins when characters set out from the woods toward the unicorns.

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Time Frame: Each character can make a check in this challenge once per minute.

Primary Skills: Arcana, Bluff, Diplomacy, Nature, Stealth.

Arcana (DC 13): The character knows that unicorns are intelligent magical beasts that speak Common but prefer Elven. They can be reasoned with, and they respect arcane and primal power, as well as an affinity for nature. Although the first successful Arcana check doesn't count as a success in the challenge, the characters now know they can speak Elven to the unicorns. Those who do so gain a +2 bonus to Bluff and Diplomacy checks made in the challenge.

Arcana (DC 13): After the first successful Arcana check, a character who uses the arcane power source can put on a minor display to arouse the unicorns' curiosity.

Bluff (DC 20): The character approaches openly but has a lasso in hand. Other characters who are also holding lassos can use aid another to assist in this check.

Diplomacy (DC 13): The character approaches openly with empty hands. Other characters can use aid another to assist in this check.

Nature (DC 13): A character who uses the primal power source can put on a minor display to impress the unicorns, enticing them closer.

Stealth (DC 20): The character keeps low and uses the grass and other cover to approach the unicorns.

Secondary Skill: Insight

Insight (DC 13): The character can tell how the unicorns are reacting and if they see any would-be stealthy characters. Success on this check grants a +2 bonus to primary skill checks until the end of the challenge.

Success: Characters gain a good position. They can place themselves as they wish in the tactical encounter after you place the unicorns. Those who used Stealth successfully during the challenge start the encounter hidden from the monsters.

Failure: The characters bungle the approach, and the unicorns are distrustful. Characters begin the encounter in the start area, and none are hidden.

Continue with the **Unicorn Wrangling** tactical encounter.

Unicorn Wrangling

Encounter Level 4

Setup

1 hamadryad charmer (H)
3 pixie archers (P)
2 young unicorns (U)

The characters have already entered the meadow. Place the unicorns, then have the players place their characters according to the skill challenge result. Place the other monsters only when they are seen.

As the characters prepare to make their next move, read:

All of a sudden, a striking dark-haired nymph in a red dress enters the glade.

"Halt, intruders!" she shouts, holding a gnarled staff aloft. "What do you think you are doing?"

The unicorns shy away at the sound of her voice.

Insight (DC 9): The nymph's aggressiveness confuses and agitates the unicorns.

Perception (DC 19): Creeping through the tall grass and brush are three tiny winged humanoids armed with bows. When the nymph shouts, they take aim.

The "nymph" is a hamadryad, and she doesn't wait for an answer. She attacks. As combat starts, characters who failed to spot the pixies grant combat advantage to the tiny fey during the first round of combat.

Skill Challenge: Finish

This challenge begins when the tactical encounter starts. Characters who speak Elven to the unicorns gain a +2 bonus to Bluff checks and Diplomacy checks in this challenge.

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

Time Frame: Each character can make a check in this challenge as a standard action.

Special: If the characters damage either unicorn or kill any fey in this encounter, each incident counts as one failure in the challenge.

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Bluff, Diplomacy, Thievery.

Acrobatics or Athletics (DC 13): The character lassos or jumps astride a unicorn, or otherwise impresses with physical prowess.

Bluff (DC 20): The character makes up a story about why the unicorns should follow the characters.

Diplomacy (DC 13): The character tells the truth about the characters needing the unicorns to solve problems on the island.

Thievery (DC 13): The character lassos a unicorn or performs an act of legerdemain that attracts the unicorn closer.

Secondary Skills: Arcana, Nature

Arcana or Nature (DC 13): A character who uses arcane power (Arcana) or primal power (Nature) can put on a minor display as in the previous challenge,

granting a +2 bonus to primary skill checks until the end of the challenge.

Success: The characters coerce the unicorns into coming peacefully, or they impress the unicorns enough to make the beasts want to follow to see what is so important. If the unicorns agree to accompany the characters, the other fey stop attacking.

Failure: The characters fail to convince either of the unicorns. After a round or two more, Robin yells from the forest edge for the characters to retreat. The enemy fey do not pursue. It was a good try, so Robin still agrees to take the characters to meet Ragnar.

Tactics

Hamadryad: After using *spellbinding beauty* right away, this creature maneuvers for combat advantage so she can use *beguile* as often as possible.

Hamadryad Charmer (H)	**Level 3 Controller**
Medium fey humanoid	
HP 45; **Bloodied** 22	**Initiative** +3
AC 17, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 16	**Perception** +8
Speed 6 (forest walk)	Low-light vision
Standard Actions	
Root Staff (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 2 damage.	
Effect: The hamadryad can slide the target 1 square.	
Beguile (charm) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Close blast 3 (one creature granting combat advantage to the hamadryad); +6 vs. Will	
Hit: The hamadryad slides the target up to half its speed, and then the target must make a basic attack as a free action against a target of the hamadryad's choice.	
Minor Actions	
Spellbinding Beauty ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Effect: Every enemy that can see the hamadryad grants her combat advantage until the end of her next turn.	
Str 10 (+1) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 14 (+3)	
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 12 (+2) **Cha** 17 (+4)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment robes, staff	

Pixie Archers: These archers fly and shoot, avoiding melee combat. Each archer saves *pixie dust* until a melee attacker comes near, or to thwart enemy concealment or invisibility.

Unicorns: The unicorns are confused when the hamadryad shows up. They attack the characters in the first round (basic attacks only), but they continue to attack only if they are damaged or if the heroes use lethal force against the other fey.

Development

The unicorns quickly come to see the characters' wrangling attempt as a great game, so roleplay them this way. When a unicorn is lassoed, it uses *fey step* to slip free and mocks the character playfully. A unicorn might gently buck off a rider, helping to make sure the rider doesn't get hurt from the fall before the unicorn gallops away. Although the unicorns are competitive enough to enjoy a good contest, they warn the characters against killing or seriously harming the other fey. A unicorn might use *horn touch* to help a bloodied hamadryad or pixie ally.

Eventually, the hamadryad and the pixies come to understand that the characters aren't out to hurt the unicorns, and (when you deem it appropriate) they become less aggressive. They aim to subdue or drive off the characters, rather than using lethal force. If they reduce a character to 0 hit points or fewer, they knock that character unconscious rather than cause the character to be dying.

3 Pixie Archers (P)	**Level 2 Artillery**
Tiny fey humanoid	
HP 30; **Bloodied** 15	**Initiative** +4
AC 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14	**Perception** +8
Speed 4, fly 6 (altitude limit 1)	Low-light vision
Standard Actions	
Rapier (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage.	
Longbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 4 damage.	
Fey Shot (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Effect: The pixie uses *longbow* twice.	
Pixie Dust (charm) ✦ **Encounter**	
Attack: Area burst 1 within 5 (creatures in the burst); +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target is dazed and gains no benefit from concealment or invisibility until the end of the pixie's next turn.	
Skills Stealth +9	
Str 6 (-1) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)	
Con 12 (+2) **Int** 12 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+2)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment leather armor, rapier, longbow, 20 arrows	

2 Young Unicorns (U)	**Level 4 Skirmisher**
Large fey magical beast	
HP 52; **Bloodied** 26	**Initiative** +8
AC 18, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15	**Perception** +8
Speed 8	Low-light vision
Standard Actions	
Hooves ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage, and the unicorn shifts up to 2 squares.	
Piercing Charge ✦ **At-Will**	
Requirement: The unicorn must charge.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 5 damage, and the unicorn pushes the target 1 square and knocks the target prone.	
Move Actions	
Fey Step (teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**	
Effect: The unicorn teleports up to 5 squares.	
Minor Actions	
Horn Touch (healing) ✦ **Daily**	
Effect: An adjacent ally regains 10 hit points.	
Skills Nature +8	
Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 12 (+3)	
Con 12 (+3) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 15 (+4)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven	

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright daylight.

Boulders: These rocks are 5 feet high (Athletics DC 9 to climb) and blocking terrain.

Bushes: These plants are difficult terrain, and bush squares are lightly obscured.

Ponds: These pools contain shallow water, which is difficult terrain,

Trees: The trees are 30 feet high (Athletics DC 9 to climb), and the trunks are blocking terrain. Above 10 feet, the branches and leaves render the area lightly obscured.

Conclusion

When the characters retreat, with the unicorns in tow or without them, the battle is over. If the unicorns accompany the party, they are willing to use *horn touch*, if that power is still available, for the characters' benefit.

Continue with **Ending the Session,** below.

Ending the Session

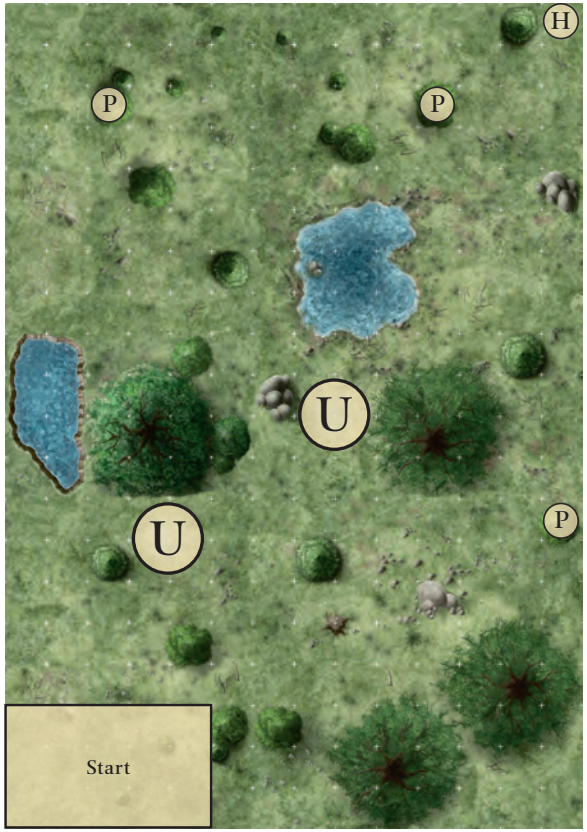
Even if the characters failed to win over the unicorns, Robin allows them to take a short rest, then gleefully leads them back to the Green Fey camp.

When the characters go, read:

You retreat to Ragnar's camp. Robin runs along beside you, laughing and congratulating you on your work. Soon, you arrive back through the leafy-faced posts that guard the entryway into the campsite.

"I shall go tell Ragnar of your bravery," says Robin with an elaborate bow. "He'll surely wish to see you thereafter. Meanwhile, drink and eat and make merry."

If the characters succeeded in bringing the unicorns here, Robin takes them with him. The Green Fey start drinking and eating again, as well as weaving



the tale of the unicorn heist with a focus on humorous moments. They ask the characters to entertain (by making various skill checks, all DC 13)—dancing or tumbling (Acrobatics or Athletics), telling jokes (Bluff), rhyming or making music (Diplomacy), telling tales (History), or performing tricks (Arcana or Thievery). Satyrs celebrate their brothers, so a satyr character gains a +4 bonus to any check to entertain the fey in this scene.

The Green Fey are also curious about what the characters have learned since their arrival on the island. Use this as an opportunity to remind the players what their characters should know.

Reward

At the end of the session, each character gains 300 XP for interacting with the Green Fey, rustling the unicorns, and battling the Summer Fey.

Treasure: If the Green Fey learn that the characters need leaves as keys, a quiet wilden points out the oak trees and makes sure the characters gain a fine oak leaf.

The satyrs teach the most successful reveler among the characters—the one with the highest check result at the gathering above—the *feast of recuperation* fey gift (see *Player's Option: Heroes of the Feywild*).

When Robin returns, he tells the characters he is taking them to see Ragnar. Before the characters move on, Robin gives them *+1 magic armor* or one magic item from the Treasure Table, page 66. He also gives each character a moonstone worth 50 gp.

Summer Glade

The characters arrive in this scene if they decide to approach the Summer Fey camp peacefully.

If they do so, read:
The Summer Fey camp is across the island, over an ornate bridge across the enchanted stream, out of the forest, and through a broad meadow where two young unicorns play. The forest on this side of the island is at the height of summer, the warm breeze heavy with scents of flowers. As you enter a flowering glade, three tiny fairies on gossamer wings fly to greet you. Dressed in shiny leather that looks like fish scales, they float effortlessly upon the air.

"Guests!" one female says.

"Perhaps they know some games," says the other female.

"Maybe they're Green Fey spies!" says the male.

"Do not be rude, Nettle," says a beautiful dark-haired nymph as she emerges into the glade. She carries a staff and wears a red dress covered with countless flowers.

Nature (DC 8): Mistletoe hangs from trees here.

The three pixies are named, in the order they spoke, Cobweb, Peaseblossom, and Nettle. The "nymph" is actually a hamadryad named Kelindria. She and the pixies welcome the characters to the glade.

Talking with the Summer Fey

The Summer Fey are fascinated with the characters and ask them to tell tales of the mortal world. In conversation, the pixies are childlike, enthusiastic, and overbold. They rattle off questions and thoughts at random, continue one another's sentences, and rarely pause for breath. Kelindria acts as a moderator, an eye in the storm that answers most of the characters' questions. When the characters speak with them, the Summer Fey might reveal the following.

Why are Uma and Ragnar at odds? *"That brash green-skinned fool blames Uma for our failure to stop the Dream Queen, Soryth, completely. He insults our beautiful mistress's courage, when it is his rashness that caused our failure and sorrow."*

What do you mean, "completely"? *"We came here, our queen having learned that her son's soul slept fitfully in his tomb alongside his wife, Caerwyn. The hag was engaged in an evil rite to use the souls to take control of the island. When Ragnar's Green Fey attacked directly, the magic went wild and, Uma says, Porpherio's soul went, at least partially, into another of the hag's captives—a young, handsome man. The other part went into the hag's consort, a fiend we call Kalbon, the Horned King."*

Where is this "handsome man" now? *"He is lost to us. When the magic went wild, we were scattered over the island. We rejoined our forces, but have not had time to find Caerwyn and Porpherio. Uma says that Ragnar told her he plans to kill the man that contains Porpherio's soul to deny the hag her prize. Uma split with him over this murderous plot."*

Can you tell us more about the island? *"Long ago, it was a gift from Oran, Lord of the Green Fey, and Tiandra, our Summer Queen, to Caerwyn and Porpherio on their wedding day. It bestows great powers upon its rulers, such as a fountain that cures all and a hidden palace that no one can enter when forbidden from it, as we have now been. When Caerwyn died, Porpherio kept her soul and built a tomb where both could sleep away eternity as silent rulers of this place. They never expected a plot like Soryth's."*

What is Soryth's plot? *"Soryth's song, as some call the ritual, would have placed the souls of Porpherio and Caerwyn under the hag's control—probably in her body and that of the Horned King. Uma knows more."*

The hag has Caerwyn/Juliana. *"This is dire news. She must be stopped. Maybe you bold few can succeed where we have failed."*

How do we find Caerwyn/Juliana? *"If Soryth has her, she is in the hidden Palace of Spires, accessible only through a twisted maze that we can no longer enter due to Soryth's power over this place and her curse upon us."*

Can we see Uma? *"Uma fears Ragnar's wrath, and she sees none who have failed to prove they have no love for Ragnar. If you can prove this to us, through action, we can take you to see Uma."*

What can we do? *"We have a great idea, Kelindria!" shout the pixies.*

"Yes," says Kelindria, raising her eyebrows, "the pixies were forbidden from doing this deed themselves, but I suppose you could. They want to lure some bears into the Green Fey camp to destroy the mead barrels there."

"They'll mourn the loss of their mead," says Nettle, "but maybe it'll motivate them to do a little more than drink."

If the characters agree, continue with **Bear Baiting.**

The Summer Fey show no hard feelings if the characters want to talk to Ragnar first. In this case, go to **Green Glen**, page 82.

Bear Baiting

Cobweb, Peaseblossom, and Nettle provide clay pots of honey mixed with mead equal to, two plus the number of characters.

As the pixies explain, read:
"You're going to need these," says Peaseblossom.

"To lure the bears from their cave," says Cobweb.

"Then, bam! Into the Green Fey Camp!" shouts Nettle, punching his own hand.

"The honeyed mead is to throw so the bears follow you," says Cobweb.

"But keep some so they can smell it," says Nettle.

"Also so the bears want more," says Peaseblossom.

"Crush the mead barrels to get it!" says Cobweb.

"Caution, though, my bold friends. You need to be quite stealthy," says Kelindria. "The bear cave is on the edge of Green Fey territory, and the bears are faster than you are, so be careful in finding and enticing them."

The pixies give the characters directions to the bear cave and the Green Fey camp.

Skill Challenge: Infiltration

This challenge begins when the characters set out from Uma's territory to the bear cave.

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures)

Time Frame: Each character can make a check in the challenge once per minute.

Primary Skills: Endurance, Nature, Perception, Stealth

Endurance (DC 8, group check): The characters attempt to move through Green Fey territory with speed and efficiency. Each character makes an Endurance check, and the party earns one success in the challenge if at least half the checks are successful.

Nature (DC 13): The character can pick a good trail through the woods, as well as identify tracks accurately to avoid the Green Fey and find the bears.

Perception (DC 13): The character acts as a guide, noting natural features, promising tracks, and good trails in the woods.

Stealth (DC 13, group check): Even though speed is essential, noise must be kept to a minimum. Each character makes a Stealth check, and the party earns one success in the challenge if at least half the checks are successful.

Secondary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics

Acrobatics or Athletics (DC 20): The character helps the party along a rough path of deep gullies, fallen-tree bridges, and short climbs to the rolling terrain in which the bears reside. This check, if successful, grants a +2 bonus to the group's Stealth checks until the end of the challenge.

Success: The characters find the bear cave.

If the characters succeed in the challenge, read:
Two young brown bears play in front of the cave, unaware of your observation. The cave is shallow, and a larger bear—the mother, perhaps—sleeps within.

Failure: The characters take a –2 penalty to checks in the next skill challenge except for Intimidate checks, to which they gain a +2 bonus.

If the characters fail the challenge, read:
Two young brown bears play in front of the shallow cave as you approach. Sensing you, they flee inside, rousing a larger bear that is likely their mother.

Skill Challenge: Luring Bears

This challenge begins when the characters try to lure the bears.

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures)

Time Frame: Each character can make a check in the challenge once per minute.

Primary Skills: Athletics, Bluff, Intimidate, Nature

Athletics (DC 8): The character accurately tosses a honey mead pot, spacing multiple throws (if appropriate) to lure the bears along.

Bluff (DC 13): The character waves an open honey mead pot to lure the bears into following.

Intimidate (DC 20): The character angers a bear, causing it to give chase.

Success: The bears start to follow the characters at a leisurely distance, enjoying the sweet bait. Then they start to move closer to the characters, just as the heroes move out of the forest into a clearing. The characters gain a surprise round in the upcoming tactical encounter.

Failure: The bears chase the characters. Each character must succeed on a DC 20 Endurance check or lose a healing surge in the chase.

When this challenge ends, continue with the **Honeyed Chaos** tactical encounter.

Honeyed Chaos

Encounter Level 5

Setup

2 satyr brawlers (S)
2 wilden hunters (W)
2 young bears (Y)
1 bear (B)
5 mead barrels (M)

The goal here is to break the mead barrels, and the characters know this fact.

When the characters arrive, read:
You burst into the glen, startling several satyrs and wilden in the midst of a revel at their campsite. The fey stare at you through drink-dazed eyes, and then they spot the bears behind you. They stand aghast for a moment, and then some flee in panic. Only a few defiant ones remain behind.

In the south end of the camp, you spot your targets. Five mead barrels stand on end around the site.

If the characters succeeded in the "Luring Bears" skill challenge, they gain a surprise round. Do not roll initiative for the bears (see "Tactics").

Handling the Bears

If a character does any of the things described below, then on its next turn, the affected bear chases the character.

A bear that's chasing a character stops if it moves adjacent to a barrel or a square covered with honey mead from one of the pots. A bear attacks a barrel that it stops adjacent to, or it stops for 1 round to eat the honey mead in a spot covered in the stuff.

Attack: A character who damages a bear is chased by that bear even if the animal is next to a mead barrel. If a character damages a young bear, the character is also chased by the mother bear.

Bluff (DC 13): As part of a move action, a character carrying a honey mead pot can move adjacent to a bear to attract its attention.

Nature (DC 13 standard action, DC 20 minor action): A character can get a bear to chase him or her, gaining a +4 bonus to this check if he or she is carrying a honey mead pot.

2 Satyr Brawlers (S) **Level 3 Brute**
Medium fey humanoid

HP 55; **Bloodied** 27 **Initiative** +3
AC 15, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 15 **Perception** +2
Speed 6 Low-light vision

Standard Actions

⊕ **Gore** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage.

⸸ **Running Gore** ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The satyr must charge.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage, and the satyr pushes the target up to 2 squares. The satyr can then move to the nearest square adjacent to the target.

Triggered Actions

Dazing Gore ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The satyr hits an enemy with *running gore.*
Effect (Free Action): The target is dazed (save ends).

Stumbling Blow ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Trigger: The satyr uses *gore* and misses.
Effect (Free Action): The satyr shifts up to 3 squares to a square adjacent to an enemy and uses *gore* again.

Skills Bluff +8, Nature +7
Str 16 (+4) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 15 (+3) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 15 (+3)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven

Throwing Honey

A character can throw a honey mead pot as a ranged attack (+5 vs. Reflex if targeting a creature or an object). Any creature, object, or square hit by the pot becomes covered in honey mead for the rest of the

2 Wilden Hunters (W) **Level 2 Lurker**
Medium fey humanoid

HP 33; **Bloodied** 16 **Initiative** +8
AC 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14 **Perception** +9
Speed 6 Low-light vision

Traits

Camouflage
The hunter can attempt a Stealth check to hide when it has cover or concealment instead of needing superior cover or total concealment.

Sniper
Whenever the hunter is hidden and misses with a ranged attack, it remains hidden.

Hidden Shot
The hunter deals 5 extra damage against enemies from which it is hidden.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.

➶ **Longbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20/40 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 3 damage.

Triggered Actions

Pursuit of the Hunter ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: An enemy ends its movement within 2 squares of the hunter
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The hunter shifts 3 squares. Until the end of its next turn, the hunter's ranged attacks against the triggering enemy deal 5 extra damage and ignore cover and concealment.

Skills Athletics +6, Stealth +9
Str 11 (+1) **Dex** 16 (+4) **Wis** 17 (+4)
Con 15 (+3) **Int** 11 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment leather armor, short sword, longbow, 20 arrows

2 Young Bears (Y) **Level 2 Brute**
Medium natural beast

HP 45; **Bloodied** 22 **Initiative** +3
AC 14, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13 **Perception** +2
Speed 7

Traits

Devour
Any creature grabbed by the bear at the start of the bear's turn takes 1d6 + 4 damage.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage.

⸸ **Bear Grab** ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: The bear uses *claw* twice against the same target. If both attacks hit, the target falls prone, and the bear grabs the target (escape DC 13) if it has no other creature grabbed.

Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 15 (+3) **Int** 2 (-3) **Cha** 10 (+1)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Bear (B) **Level 5 Brute**
Large natural beast

HP 80; **Bloodied** 40 **Initiative** +3
AC 17, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16 **Perception** +3
Speed 8

Traits

Devour
Any creature grabbed by the bear at the start of the bear's turn takes 1d8 + 5 damage.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 7 damage.

⸸ **Bear Grab** ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Effect: The bear uses *claw* twice against the same target. If either attack hits, the target falls prone, and the bear grabs the target (escape DC 15) if it has fewer than two creatures grabbed.

Str 20 (+7) **Dex** 13 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+3)
Con 20 (+7) **Int** 2 (-2) **Cha** 12 (+3)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

encounter. If the pot misses, it lands in a square nearest to the thrower that is also adjacent to the target. In any case, a thrown pot is destroyed.

Tactics

The fey quickly discern that the characters are the perpetrators of this chaos. They attack the characters and avoid the bears. If the bears attack the fey (such as if one or more of the satyrs and the wilden become covered in honey mead), have the players make the attack rolls and the damage rolls for the bears.

Bears: The bears go last in the initiative order, the Large mother bear going last. Each attacks the nearest target from among a mead barrel, a target covered in honey mead, or a character carrying a honey mead pot, in that order. Too interested in food, the bears make no opportunity attacks. They keep no targets grabbed if mead can be had instead. If a bear attacks a mead barrel, the animal remains next to that barrel until the end of the encounter or until the bear takes damage.

Satyrs: These fey try to keep the characters away from the mead barrels and protect the wilden. A satyr might push a character into the campfire.

Wilden: The hunters use the trees for *camouflage* to better employ *sniper* and *hidden shot*. At the start of the battle, each wilden climbs a tree adjacent to its starting position.

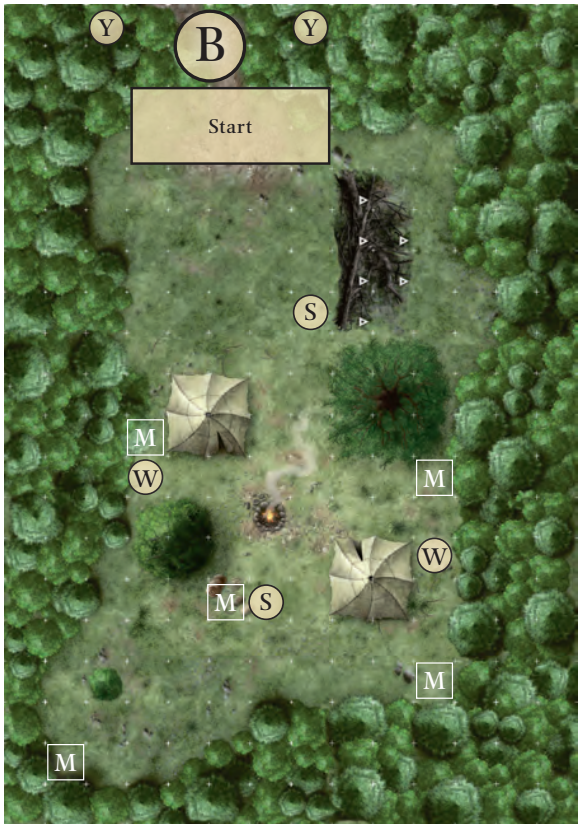
Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright daylight.

Bushes and Debris: The small plants and fallen trees are difficult terrain.

Campfire: A creature that ends its movement (forced or otherwise) or ends its turn in the fire takes 5 fire damage.

Forest Trees: These plants are 20 feet high (Athletics DC 9 to climb). The large tree south of the debris area is 40 feet high, and its trunk is blocking



terrain. Above 10 feet, the branches and leaves render the area lightly obscured.

Mead Barrels (M): Each barrel is made of wood and stands 3 feet high. It is difficult terrain. A barrel has AC 5, Reflex 5, Fortitude 12, Will –, and 20 hit points.

Tents: These shelters are difficult terrain, and they collapse if anyone enters their space.

Conclusion

Once all the mead barrels are broken, the characters can retreat and take a short rest. Continue with **Ending the Session,** below.

Ending the Session

All three pixies applaud the characters' return. Kelindria points out that the true goal of their encounter with the bears was to show a lack of loyalty to Ragnar, and the heroes have done that in a very feylike way. She goes to ask Uma to grant an audience with the characters.

While everyone waits, the pixies ask for performances (see **Ending the Session** on page 85). In this socializing, the pixies play favorites. Any pixie characters gain a +4 bonus to skill checks made in this scene.

Reward

At the end of the session, each character gains 300 XP for the party's accomplishments.

Treasure: If the Summer Fey learn about the keys, then Cobweb points out the mistletoe.

The pixies give the most entertaining character—the one with the highest check result—a *spidersilk sack* (see *Player's Option: Heroes of the Feywild*).

Kelindria returns to take the characters to Uma. Before they depart, she gives the party *+1 sylvan armor* or one magic item from the Treasure Table, page 66. She also gives each character a silver ring with a knotwork pattern (50 gp).

Session 6: Fey Agents

After completing mischief for the fey, the characters meet one of the archfey agents, Ragnar or Uma. If the characters wrangled the unicorns, Robin the satyr takes them before Ragnar—continue with **Verbeeg Ego.** Characters who broke the mead barrels follow Kelindria to see Uma in **Summer's Face**, on the next page.

Verbeeg Ego

If the characters successfully coerced the unicorns into the Green Fey camp, the creatures are standing beside Ragnar when the characters meet him. Include them in your description.

As the characters approach Ragnar, read:
Robin speaks as he leads. "Ragnar is a warrior," he says, "a hero among the Green Fey. Treat him with respect. He is already impressed with your exploits. He might even make you his champions, since we are now all but powerless against the hag. What a great tale that will make, eh?"

VERBEEG LORE

Arcana (DC 13): The creature on the makeshift throne is a verbeeg, a giant of the Feywild. Verbeegs are usually warriors, but they are also tricksters.

Arcana (DC 20): Verbeegs lean toward behavior that worldly folk might consider to be wicked. These fey giants are sly, egotistical creatures that take advantage of any weakness. Verbeegs make no oath lightly, but they keep any promise to the letter.

Robin leads the way into another meadow, parting branches for easy passage. Like a king, a green-skinned giant sits on a carved wooden chair upon a raised stone. His face is grim under a mass of black braids that match his eyes. He wears fine hide armor and a cloak of purple fur. To his left is a wooden shield carved with a smiling face of oak leaves, and at his right is a boar spear and a wooden flagon. Well-armed satyrs and wilden attend him, and some others cook good-smelling foods over the campfires.

"Ragnar, soldier of the Green Lord," says Robin with a bow and flourish. "Ask of him what you will."

Talking with Ragnar

Ragnar is devious, moody, rash, sarcastic, and given to wrath. He broods over his failure against Soryth. His anger at Uma is misplaced, but his hazy memory of the attack prevents him from admitting any fault. He can reveal the following. (He uses any names he knows, such as Orlando's, in the following dialogue.)

What's the story here? Ragnar can tell the characters information from The Feywild and Archfey Agents sections of the **Adventure Background,** pages 64 and 65, but he knows nothing of the island's connection to the world. However, Ragnar assumes the characters used a fey crossing to come here, so he questions them about it, finishing with, *"This crossing must have been how the hag came to the island."*

What's with this hag? *"The hag, Soryth, the so-called Dream Queen, is a wicked exile from the eladrin city of Astrazalian. She came here and found the key to the island's control—the souls of my lord's daughter and her husband. The Summer Fey witch Uma told me that wards on the tomb where the souls slept were to warn the archfey if anyone disturbed those resting within. Soryth did, which is why we're here. Soryth has discerned a way to thwart the wards and seeks to use the souls of the archfey's children to gain power over this place. We attacked her as she cast a great spell to that end, but victory was denied us. Now, we are cursed, bound to this island and against invading Soryth's lair again."*

Soryth's lair? "*Yes, the Palace of Spires, a hidden world of its own beyond a great maze of brambles.*" (Ragnar can tell the characters about the keys.)

Were Orlando and Juliana with the hag? "*Yes, they were there when we attacked. Uma later told me that the hag's magic was manipulating the souls of the children of the archfey and those mortals. When our attack broke the magic, souls and minds were swapped. All of us awoke in the forests here. We regrouped, but we did not find the ones you speak of.*"

Juliana thought she was Caerwyn. "*Yes, Uma told me that when the hag's magic went wrong, minds and souls changed places. Caerwyn's is, at least partly, inside this Juliana. It follows that Porpherio's is partly inside the human male.*"

Why do you feud with the Summer Fey? "*Uma should have been able to contain the magic that thwarted and cursed us, and scattered the souls. She failed. Further, she is unwilling to help in the solution I have devised. I don't work with weaklings.*"

What was your plan? "*I sent my cousin Basal to slay the one who is Porpherio. If Basal succeeds, the soul will be freed and the hag denied her power. I told Uma of this plan, and the witch named me a murderer. Let her drown in her perfume in her camp yonder until the Summer Queen calls her home.*"

Why haven't the archfey come? "*They don't know what has happened. Their own wards, some now under the hag's control, prevent us from contacting them.*"

When the discussion ends, read:

A sly look crosses Ragnar's features. For the first time he smiles, and he says, "My scouts saw Porpherio in the arms of a nymph in the southwestern forest this morning. Basal has yet to catch him, obviously. Were I to move now, I have no doubt that Uma would counter me. But she might not notice you. If you can find the nymph and bring Porpherio to me, we shall decide how to mend this mess. Move swiftly. If Basal finds your man first, he is surely dead."

When the characters are ready to start out on their hunt for the nymph, go to the **Barkburrs** tactical encounter on the next page.

Summer's Face

With the pixies excitedly following, Kelindria takes the characters to see Uma.

As the characters approach Uma's throne, read:

Kelindria leads you through undergrowth full of fragrant flowers. She parts the greenery ahead, revealing a meadow on the edge of a placid lake that reflects the perfect sky. "Uma will be happy to see you," Kelindria says with a smile, gesturing for you to go forward.

The Summer Fey camp has no shelter, but two rose arbors stand to either side of a throne of woven vines blooming with flowers. A verdant hedge maze opens behind the seat. Upon the living chair sits a beautiful female fey in a golden gown bedecked with flowers and jewels. Her hair is the color of copper touched with gold where the sunlight hits it. Sad eyes, white like an eladrin's, gaze at you as you come forward. Nymphs, pixies, and dryads dance, sing, and play in the meadow and in the water, but many among them stare at you and come close to the throne as you do.

As you draw near, Uma smiles—just a little—but with that smile the air becomes warmer, and the earth and vines nearby bloom with new growth. "Welcome," she says in a sweet voice, "I am Uma. I hear my fairies have had you up to no good." She looks at the pixies who have followed you, who redden at her slight reproach. Uma then turns back to you, saying, "What can one such as I can do for you?"

Talking with Uma

Uma is compassionate, gracious, and patient, but she is also initially indecisive. She is trying to formulate a plan to fix the troubles on the island, but she is vexed with Ragnar and his bellicose ways. Uma thinks that Ragnar's rashness is exactly what caused the failure during the first attack on Soryth, but her memory is unclear. Uma already knows Juliana and Orlando by name—she heard them call to each other when Soryth's spell went wrong.

What's the story here? Uma can tell the characters information from The Feywild and Archfey Agents sections of the **Adventure Background,** pages 64 and 65, but she doesn't know about the fey crossing. She questions how the characters arrived here, and when she learns of the crossing, she says, "*Tiandra and Oran must not have known of this crossing. That must be how the hag came here.*"

Who is this hag? "*The Dream Queen, Soryth, is an exile from Astrazalian, an eladrin city. An evil creature indeed, she came here to take control. The only way she could hope to do so is to use the souls of the isle's true stewards, Caerwyn and Porpherio. Brazenly, she has done just that with a subtlety few can match. Archfey are subtler still, which is why the wards my queen placed on the island alerted her. She sent us to find out what was going on. We discovered Soryth's plot, and with the Green Fey, we attacked her before she could complete her black magic song. Our attack was obviously ill conceived, for we failed to thwart her. Now the hag's power on this isle binds us from trying again, leaving, and sending a message to the Summer Queen.*"

Where is Soryth that you can't find her? "*She is in the Palace of Spires, a tiny plane connected to this island through a magical maze.*" (Uma can tell the characters all about the keys if needed.)

Were Orlando and Juliana with the hag? "*The two mortals were there, yes. Soryth was using their souls as part of her ritual. I think she planned to let their souls sleep while she and her consort, the Horned King Kalbon, absorbed most of the souls of the archfey's children. Had she succeeded, she and Kalbon would have become masters of this place. Our attack caused the magic to go wild, and the souls Soryth was manipulating traded places unpredictably. Now Juliana and Orlando walk the edge of destruction, each containing the mind and soul of another. Hope yet remains, however.*"

Hope? *"Yes, if we can undo the soul swapping and thwart Soryth, perhaps we can yet prevail. I believe fate has sent you to me for just that reason."*

Why do you feud with the Green Fey? *"Ragnar attacked too boldly. If he had given me time to unravel the magic carefully, none of this would have happened. Now, he plans to simply murder Orlando to deny Soryth her goal. He has sent his oaf of a cousin, the verbeeg named Basal, to do the deed. How can one work with such lazy simpletons?*

"Thankfully, Basal has not succeeded. I have learned that the addled Orlando chased a summer nymph into the forest just yesterday. Would that it had been one of my sisters. But that was not to be."

When the discussion ends, read:
Uma speaks gently but firmly. "If we fail to act quickly, Ragnar's folly will cost us dearly. I ask you to champion me in my cause. Please seek out the summer nymph, find Orlando, and bring him to me. If I act directly, conflict with the Green Fey is inevitable. Innocents could be harmed. Spare us this violence, and act on my behalf?"

When the characters are ready to start out on their hunt for the nymph, continue with the **Barkburrs** tactical encounter.

Barkburrs

Encounter Level 2

Setup

2 bloodthorn vines (B)
1 vine horror (V)
2 barkburr trees (T)

Place none of the monsters until the characters come into the grove and see the creatures. Some of the threats here can be seen before the encounter begins, but the vine horror lurks out of sight.

2 Bloodthorn Vines (B)	**Level 2 Soldier**
Medium natural beast (plant)	
HP 41; **Bloodied** 20	**Initiative** +3
AC 18, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 14	**Perception** +3
Speed 5 (forest walk)	Blindsight 10
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Striking Vines** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage.	
⸸ **Impaling Thorn** (healing) ✦ **Recharge** when the vine doesn't have a creature grabbed	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +5 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 1d8 + 4 damage, and the vine grabs the target (escape DC 13).	
Sustain Standard: The vine sustains the grab until the end of its next turn, the target takes 2d8 + 4 damage, and the vine regains 5 hit points.	
Minor Actions	
Pulling Vines ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The vine shifts 1 square, pulling any creature it has grabbed into a space adjacent to it.	
Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 10 (+1) **Wis** 14 (+3)	
Con 17 (+4) **Int** 2 (-3) **Cha** 6 (-1)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

If fewer than half the characters succeed on the DC 13 Perception check below, start the party in the Surprised area on the map. The group notices the area's dangers only after wandering among them. Characters who succeeded on the check, along with the monsters (except for the vine horror), gain a surprise round.

If half or more of the characters succeed on the Perception check, the party begins in the Start area on the map. Nobody is surprised.

When the characters approach the grove, read:
The forest descends into a narrow hollow that contains a grove of old trees with enough space separating them to allow in the summerlike sun of the island. Undergrowth is sparse here and the atmosphere very still. Near the center of the grove are two particularly gnarled, sparsely leafed trees of vaguely humanoid shape. A sword, its jeweled hilt sparkling in the sun, has been driven into the roots of the closer of those trees.

Vine Horror (V)	**Level 5 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid (plant)	
HP 63; **Bloodied** 31	**Initiative** +6
AC 19, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16	**Perception** +9
Speed 6 (forest walk, swamp walk), swim 6	Blindsight 10
Traits	
Malleability	
The vine horror can squeeze through spaces 1 inch wide. It doesn't have to squeeze to enter larger openings.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage.	
⸸ **Vicious Vines** ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied	
Attack: Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +8 vs. Reflex	
Effect: The target is restrained and takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends both).	
Skills Stealth +11	
Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+4)	
Con 15 (+4) **Int** 9 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+2)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven	

Nature (DC 9): The trees here are mostly old oaks with mistletoe among their branches.

Perception (DC 13): Green vines that have crimson thorns lurk among the roots of two trees here. In the branches of one of the humanoid-shaped oaks is a shiny object. Success on this check allows a DC 13 Nature check to identify the bloodthorn vines.

Perception (DC 20): The humanoid-shaped trees have tiny wooden protrusions that look out of place. Success on this check enables a DC 20 Nature check to identify the barkburrs on the trees.

As the party spots the dangers here, combat begins.

Tactics

The denizens of this corrupt grove are allies, with the vine horror in the lead.

Bloodthorn Vines: Like the beasts they are, each of these plants attacks the nearest character or the character who dealt the vine the most damage on the last round. Once a vine has a target grabbed, though, the plant sustains the grab and drags the grabbed creature toward the barkburr trees. As long as the vine horror remains alive, these creatures do not flee.

Vine Horror: The vine horror stays out of sight until all the characters and the bloodthorn vines have acted. It then emerges from hiding and uses *vicious vines* on as many characters as it can catch in the burst to restrain them within range of the barkburr trees. This creature mocks its fleshy foes in Elven as it fights. If the characters defeat the barkburr trees and the bloodthorn vines, the vine horror retreats.

Barkburrs

Barkburrs are nonsentient mobile plants that can inject a lignifying poison into victims who come too close. A single barkburr looks like a diminutive conical wooden formation. Barkburrs can infest normal trees, making those trees barkburr trees. If a nearby nonplant creature acts violently against nearby plants, barkburrs react by attacking the nonplant creature and injecting a toxin that turns the creature into wood. After such a creature is lignified (petrified), it grows into a gnarled tree. If barkburrs create a tree in this way, they infest the new tree rather than the nearby normal trees.

Someone who has training in Nature can touch a barkburr tree and empathically influence the barkburrs not to attack. If the tree on which barkburrs live is destroyed, the barkburrs quickly perish.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright daylight.

Bushes and Rocks: Squares containing undergrowth and rubble are difficult terrain.

2 Barkburr Trees (T) **Level 2 Hazard**
Object

Detect Perception DC 20, Nature DC 20 to identify
HP 34
AC 16, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 10
Immune poison, all conditions; **Vulnerable** 5 fire

Triggered Actions

Lignifying Barkburrs (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy ends its turn within 4 squares of the barkburr tree trunk.
Attack (Opportunity Action): Close burst 4 (the triggering enemy in the burst); +8 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d10 damage, and the target is slowed and takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends both).
First Failed Saving Throw: Ongoing 5 poison damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends both).
Second Failed Saving Throw: The target is petrified until one of the following conditions is met.
✦ A power, such as *holy cleansing*, releases the target.
✦ The barkburr tree responsible for the petrifying effect is destroyed, and its sap is applied to the target's forehead before a full day passes.

Countermeasures

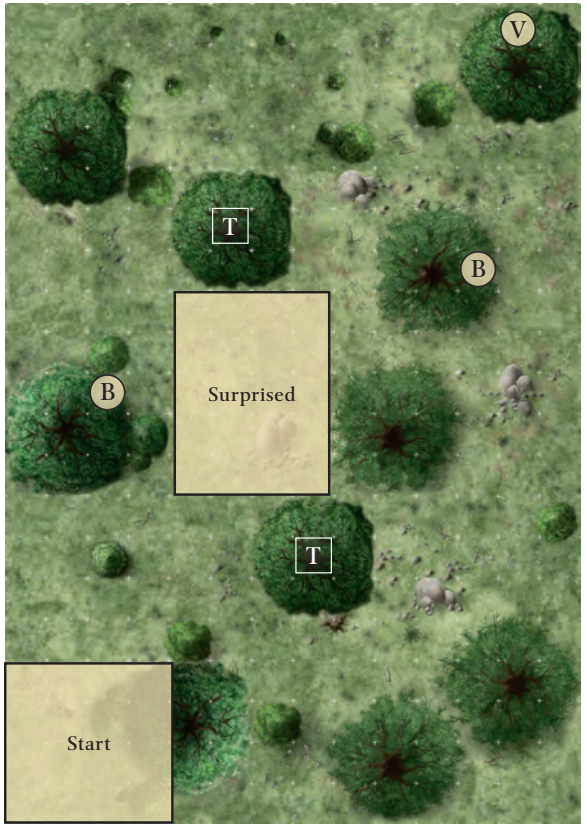
✦ **Disable:** Nature DC 21 (minor action) or DC 13 (standard action); three successes disable the tree's attack.
Failure (DC - 5 or lower): The tree attacks as a free action.
✦ **Delay:** Nature DC 13 (minor action); the barkburr tree does not attack on this turn.

Trees: Those trees that are not barkburr trees are 30 feet high (Athletics DC 9 to climb), and their trunks are blocking terrain. Above 10 feet, the branches and leaves render the area lightly obscured.

Barkburr Trees: These trees are lignified humanoid creatures that ran afoul of barkburrs that once infested normal oak trees in this grove. The 15-foot-tall barkburr trees are like other oak trees, except their sparse leaves offer no means of hiding.

Ending the Session

When the characters overcome the plants, recover the treasure here, and complete a short rest, the session ends.



Reward

At the end of the session, each character gains 200 XP for accepting the task to find Orlando and overcoming the vicious plants.

Treasure: The characters can find oak leaves and mistletoe growing here. At this point, they should have shamrock, mistletoe, and oak leaves,

The sword among the roots is a *+1 luckblade*—a heavy or light blade of a type you can choose to fit a character in the party, or the glittering object in the tree branches is another magic item you roll on the Treasure Table, page 66. In either case, the nonmagical item of the two is a jeweled object worth 75 gp per character.

Session 7: Finding Orlando

The characters continue their journey, and they soon run across two of the most powerful creatures living on the island.

Rosaline's Hill

When everyone is ready to start, read:
Leaving the nightmare hollow behind, you ascend through ever denser forest. You eventually emerge into an open meadow atop the hill you've just climbed. The place has weather and foliage present only in the height of summer, and a lone tree grows at its center. Like an ancient goddess, a female fey, her eyes as radiant as twin suns, emerges from the tree. Her appearance calls to mind Juliana's description of a woman fairer than any other.

"Peace," she says. "I would share words with you."

This creature is a summer nymph (*Monster Manual* 3, page 153) named Rosaline. Older and more powerful than other creatures on the island, Rosaline concerns herself with the larger issues of the cosmos. She perceives most creatures as pieces in a cosmic game, and to her, the events on the island are now unfolding as they should. Sensing Soryth's purpose, but unable to stop the hag in the Palace of Spires, Rosaline separated Orlando from Juliana.

Rosaline is warm but enigmatic. She seems to know more than she lets on. In addition to the material in the **Adventure Background,** page 64, Rosaline can reveal the following information.

Where is Orlando? *"When Orlando, who is also Porpherio, chased me through the woods yesterday, it was no frivolity. I sought to protect him from Soryth and foresaw that others would soon follow him. Heroes. You, I now see. Early this morning, I took him to Oakstaff, a treant who is my friend and shall be yours if you do rightly."*

What about Juliana? *"Her fate is . . . different. My purpose for her was fulfilled when she spoke to you in the leprechaun wood near the fairy ring. I did not foresee that Soryth would find her so quickly. But her safety is still well within your control."*

What do you mean? *"Soryth waits with bated breath to have Porpherio, who is also Orlando, in her claws again. Then, the black song shall be sung anew. Therefore, Juliana is safe while Orlando is safe. As Oakstaff can tell you, Orlando is safe for now."*

Why can't you take out Soryth? *"Even I am prevented from entering the Palace of Spires without the leave of the island's masters. And even if I could do so, I might not. You see, it is not my destiny—not the beginning of my road to greatness. My work lies elsewhere."*

Is facing Soryth our destiny? *"Possibly. You don't really wish to know your fate before it comes for you, do you? I can say that you have begun a momentous work. I hope you see it through to the end."*

Can you help us at all? *"Haven't I? But, no, I see what you mean. Yes, my bold ones, I can help you. But for my help you must promise to talk to Oakstaff, and you must do as he bids. Be not afraid, for he is kind and will not lead you astray. Will you do as I ask?"*

When the characters agree to visit Oakstaff, read:
Rosaline produces two small crystal containers that have vapor swirling within them. She smiles again, warmly, saying, "You will know when you need these. It won't be long now."

The party gains two vials of *horse's breath*. Rosaline gives any hamadryad in the party an extra vial of *horse's breath*, calling it "a gift between sisters."

Horse's Breath — Level 6 Uncommon
Consumable 75 gp
Utility Power ✦ Consumable (Minor Action)
Effect: A mount or vehicle you are riding gains an extra move action.

Rosaline shows the characters the proper route to take off the hilltop to find Oakstaff. Continue with **Oakstaff's Grove.**

Oakstaff's Grove

When the characters go to find Oakstaff, read:
Down the other side of Rosaline's hill, in a shadowy part of the forest, is a grove of old trees, each vaguely humanoid in shape. As you draw near, a wizened face becomes apparent on the trunk of the tallest and stoutest of them. Two small cavities form its eyes, a knobby branch its nose, and moss a green beard around its mouth. The whole tree twists in your direction as you approach.

"Who comes, so grim-faced and bold, to see old Oakstaff? Is it the ones Rosaline spoke of?" he says. Then he takes a step in your direction.

This is Oakstaff the treant (*Monster Vault*, page 266). He is gregarious, opinionated, and honest. Once a knight among the Green Fey, he disapproves of Ragnar, whom Rosaline told him about. He sometimes waxes nostalgic with old war stories about fomorians and other dark fey.

After the characters identify themselves, read:
"Wait, wait," rumbles the tree-creature. "Follow me to a place where you can be at your leisure while we converse." Oakstaff leads you to a grotto through which a stream flows, with lots of rocks for comfortable seating.

Oakstaff knows much of what has transpired on the isle, such as the following.

Do you have Orlando? *Oakstaff winks and says, "We can talk plainly in this shadowy grove. It and my grotto, here, are unknown to the Dream Queen as yet. Porpherio . . . Orlando, I took from the bald hilltop this morning, from Rosaline, whom you must know."*

Where is he? *"I saw the manling safely to the Water Palace out on the lake. That's where Porpherio's real secrets*

dwell. The place is warded against evil, such as the likes of that confounded fiend and his foul lady, that hag.

"Rosaline said others might come seeking him. You must be the ones. Takes me back to quests I undertook when I was Sir Oakstaff . . ."

We should be going to get Orlando. *"Why? Where can you take him that's safer than the palace?"*

We have to retrieve him for Ragnar/Uma. *"Look, my fleshy friends, choosing sides in this strife is no good. Due to Soryth's power over this isle, no native of this island can enter her lair and stop her. The visiting fey waffle and rage while Soryth works to undo us all. Would that I could go into the Palace of Spires and flatten her. I can't, of course. The way is shut to me, as I said. But maybe my knighting days aren't over.*

"I'll tell you what. You go down to the island and take the lad back to the fey like you were asked. I'll go speak to those youngsters and see if I can make them see reason. The sooner all that's done, the sooner we can get back to fighting the real villains, eh?

"Ah, I recall the time I set out to form an alliance against the servants of Thrumbolg . . ."

Can you help us in any other way? *"No offense intended," Oakstaff says and winks, "but you folk look greener than my leaves. Maybe I can help you more."*

Over about an hour, while you relax, the treant shapes wood into vials—one for each of you. These he fills with stream water while mumbling unintelligibly.

"There," he says, "I'm sure these will help. The water has flowed through the roots of great trees and the hidden places of this island. It has the magic of growing things in it, now that I've told it what to do.

"That reminds me of a time in Shinalestra . . ."

Each character gains one dose of *rider's water*. Oakstaff gives any hamadryad character an extra dose of *rider's water*, calling it "a present for a dear cousin."

Rider's Water **Level 3 Uncommon**

This magical water can create a mount from a little animal.

Consumable 30 gp

Utility Power ✦ Consumable (Minor Action)

Effect: A Tiny natural beast or a Tiny fey creature that you pour this water on becomes a Large creature that has the mount keyword. The effect lasts until your next extended rest. Unless the DM rules otherwise, this creature has the statistics of a horse (*Monster Vault*, page 297).

When the characters are ready to go, Oakstaff tells them how to find the Water Palace. Continue with **The Lake.**

The Lake

The lake isn't far from Oakstaff's grove.

When the characters go to the lake, read:

In the middle of a serene lake is a tiny, forested isle where a small palace of white stone stands. The water is crystal clear, showing the lake's gravel bottom. Schools of multi-colored minnows swim below the surface, mirroring the iridescent dragonflies darting through the air above. In the deeper part of the lake, a group of young otters frolic, rising, submerging, and playing without care. A little way down the shoreline, a wide, flat-bottomed raft rests on the water next to a small wooden dock. A long pole, for guiding the vessel across the water, lies beside the raft.

Arcana (DC 20): The lake water has a magical aura. It is some sort of protective magic.

Characters can use the raft to travel between the shore and the island, or they can try to swim (Athletics DC 9). It's also possible to use the *rider's water* on the otters if the characters can attract the tiny animals (Nature DC 13). If the party uses the raft, one person must pilot it using the pole. That character must have two hands free.

When the characters leave the shore, continue with the **Ariel Attacks** tactical encounter.

Ariel Attacks

Encounter Level 2

Setup

Ariel, pixie wind mage (A)
4 waterspouts (W)
Tiny otters (O)

The characters begin in the Start area shown on the map. This area is the size of the raft if the characters are using that vessel.

When the encounter begins, read:

When you are well out into the lake, a voice shouts, "This island's mine, fools! Soryth and I have already won!"

On the shore you just left, a male pixie in blue robes flies just above the grass. Over him floats the shadowy image of a fanged man with large horns. The image looks as if it is sculpted of dark smoke.

To the pixie, the fiendish vision says, "Kalbon, master of this isle, commands you into battle, slave. Summon your winds. Crush these intruders, then bring me Orlando."

The face looks like it might continue its rant, but as the pixie moves over the water, the air shimmers. Like smoke on an unseen wind, the foul vision fades.

"Yes," is all the pixie says.

Four small water spouts erupt near him and move forward like predatory beasts.

Arcana (DC 13): Some magical effect on the water, a protective ward perhaps, forced the fiend's supernatural sending to end.

Insight (DC 13): Even from this distance, the glazed look in the pixie's eyes is apparent.

Tactics

Ariel: This enslaved pixie starts by using *tempest* on the characters. He then sustains that power,

preferring *wind gust* for subsequent attacks. He saves *pixie dust* to use against those whom he thinks might soon engage him in melee. See **Development.**

Waterspouts: These creatures swirl up to their enemies and use *spinning spout* to hurl those foes into the water. When they can, they use the same power to damage opponents in the water. Unlike Ariel, these elementals attack until they are destroyed.

Ariel, Pixie Wind Mage (A)	**Level 4 Controller**
Tiny fey humanoid, pixie	
HP 54; **Bloodied** 27	**Initiative** +6
AC 18, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16	**Perception** +7
Speed 4, fly 6 (altitude limit 1)	Low-light vision
Standard Actions	
Wind Spear (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage, and Ariel slides the target 1 square.	
Wind Gust ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d10 + 4 damage.	
Effect: Ariel slides the target up to 2 squares.	
Tempest (zone) ✦ **Encounter**	
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage, and Ariel pushes the target up to 3 squares.	
Miss: Half damage.	
Effect: The blast creates a windy zone that lasts until the end of Ariel's next turn. An enemy that starts its turn within the zone is slowed until end of Ariel's next turn.	
Sustain Minor: The zone persists until the end of Ariel's next turn, and Ariel can move the zone up to 2 squares.	
Pixie Dust (charm) ✦ **Encounter**	
Attack: Area burst 1 within 5 (creatures in the burst); +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target is dazed and gains no benefit from concealment or invisibility until the end of Ariel's next turn.	
Skills Arcana +8, Stealth +11	
Str 6 (+0) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 10 (+2)	
Con 14 (+4) **Int** 12 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+5)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment robes	

Development

Ariel: This pixie is without total free will (Insight DC 13). Once he is bloodied, his eyes clear, but he keeps fighting because he is confused and afraid (Insight DC 9). A successful Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check (DC 13) can make him back down. He surrenders, begging for mercy, if he is damaged after becoming bloodied.

4 Waterspouts (W)	**Level 2 Skirmisher**
Small elemental magical beast (air, water)	
HP 36; **Bloodied** 18	**Initiative** +6
AC 16, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13	**Perception** +3
Speed 4, fly 6 (altitude limit 1)	
Traits	
Insubstantial Shifting	
While shifting, the spout takes half damage from all attacks except those that deal cold damage.	
Sensitive to Cold	
Whenever the spout take cold damage, until the end of its next turn, it loses its *insubstantial shifting* trait and gains vulnerable 5 to the next attack to hit it.	
Standard Actions	
Slam ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 3 damage.	
Spinning Spout ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied	
Effect: The spout shifts up to 4 squares, and it makes one attack against each enemy it moves adjacent to.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +5 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The spout slides the target up to 2 squares and knocks it prone. An enemy in the water takes 2d6 + 3 damage instead of being knocked prone.	
Move Actions	
Shifting Wind ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The spout shifts up to 2 squares.	
Str 10 (+1) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)	
Con 12 (+2) **Int** 5 (-2) **Cha** 8 (+0)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** understands Primordial	

Otters

The otters (Tiny natural beasts, one per character) stay out of the fray and in their spot on the map unless you or the characters do something to change that. A character can try to attract the otters toward the raft (Nature DC 20) or swim toward them while keeping the curious creatures calm (Nature DC 13). The monsters do not treat the Tiny otters as enemies. An otter is useful only if a character uses *rider's water* to transform it into the following mount.

Giant Otter	**Level 1 Skirmisher**
Large natural beast (mount)	
HP 28; **Bloodied** 14	**Initiative** +5
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 11	**Perception** +5
Speed 6, swim 6	
Traits	
Aquatic Advantage (mount)	
In aquatic combat, a giant otter gains and grants its rider a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures. Creatures that have the aquatic keyword consider the otter and its rider to be aquatic.	
Standard Actions	
Bite ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d4 + 4 damage.	
Move Actions	
Playful Slide ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The otter shifts up to 3 squares and makes the following attack at any point during its move.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The target is knocked prone.	
Str 14 (+2) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+0)	
Con 12 (+1) **Int** 2 (-4) **Cha** 12 (+1)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** --	

Otters that are transformed and then not used as mounts do not join the fight but might be helpful in another way if the characters are creative.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright daylight.

Lake Water: The water is 8 feet deep and calm (Athletics DC 9 to swim).

Raft: The raft sinks if it is reduced to 0 hit points. Since the raft relies on humanoid propulsion, Ariel's *tempest* can slow it.

Raft	Huge vehicle
HP 45	
AC 10, **Fortitude** 10, **Reflex** 5	
Immune necrotic, poison, all conditions	
Speed swim 3	
Pilot	
The pilot must stand at the stern, wielding a 12-foot pole.	
Load	
Six Medium creatures; 600 pounds of gear.	
Out of Control	
If not piloted, the raft moves 1d3 – 1 squares in a random direction (minimum 0).	

Conclusion

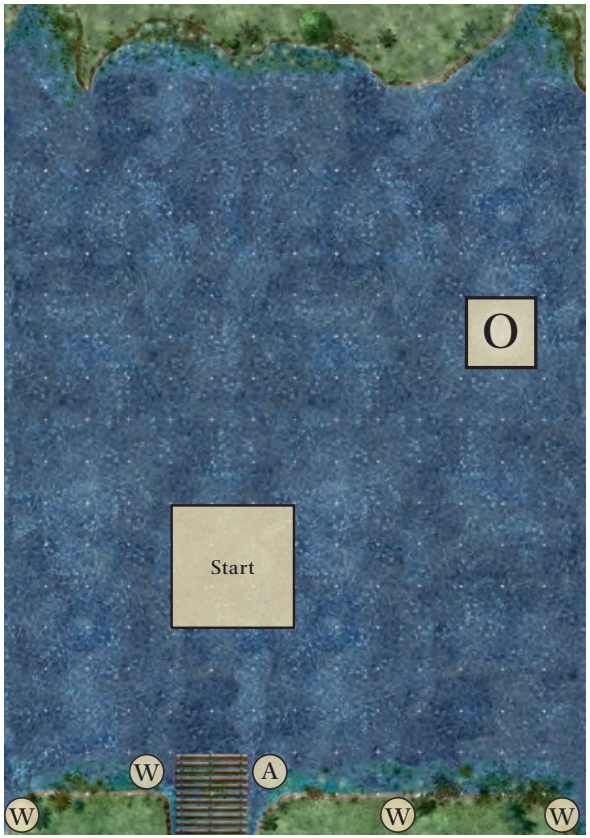
If the characters spared Ariel and talk to him, continue with **Questioning Ariel**. Otherwise, go to **Ending the Session**. Ariel also has **Treasure** (see below). Note whether the characters were merciful to Ariel. This point is important in session 12.

If the characters transformed any otters, the beasts remain in mount form until the end of this chapter.

Questioning Ariel

If the characters allow Ariel to survive and question him after the battle, the pixie apologizes for attacking, claiming he was under the power of Kalbon, the Horned King (Insight DC 9 reveals that he believes what he is saying).

Ariel can tell the characters that Kalbon sent him to bring back Orlando—running into the characters was a coincidence. The pixie also reveals that Kalbon and Soryth sent him because they cannot yet pass



Porpherio's wards, which guard the Water Palace against evil.

Ariel knows little about Soryth's plan or the island's magic, but he does know that Juliana is in the Palace of Spires.

After he divulges what he can, Ariel vows to hide from the villains but to tell the other fey of the characters' mercy.

Continue with **Ending the Session**.

Ending the Session

The session ends after the characters resolve the encounter (and perhaps speak to Ariel) and come ashore on the island of the Water Palace.

Reward

At the end of the session, each character gains 250 XP for dealing with Rosaline and Oakstaff, and for battling Ariel and the elementals.

Treasure: Ariel carries one piece of fine polished amber with a fey insect in it (30 gp) per character. He gives these freely for sparing his life.

The characters also have any doses of *horse's breath* and *rider's water* that they received and didn't use.

Session 8: Water Palace

After their encounter with Ariel, the characters make it to shore on the isle where Porpherio's Water Palace stands. After reconnoitering briefly, they begin at the **Palace Exterior.**

If any character has a passive Perception of 20 or higher, read:

As you come ashore, you notice a green-skinned giant moving cautiously along the verge of the forest beyond the far shore. He carries a spear and shield, his hair the light golden color of straw.

Palace Exterior

When the characters move inland, read:

The isle is smaller than it seemed from the far shore, probably little more than 200 paces from end to end. Aside from the palace and its features, the island has a thick stand of deciduous trees, where roses grow in the shade, and a small dock, where a raft floats in the water.

The palace resembles a great tunnel of unblemished white marble with a rounded ceiling accented with gilded metal fittings. Gigantic glazed windows occupy immense arches at the front and back of the structure, and the long sides of the palace are columned arcades open to the air.

Water falls from the domed roof, down a channel in the sides, past the windows, and into another channel that encircles the palace. This channel merges again on either side of the palace to flow into the lake. Stepping stones cross the channel, and a curved stairway leads over the channel and up to a veranda on a higher level.

The characters can explore the isle, based on what the players can visualize from your description.

Channel: The stepping stones allow easy access over the water to the veranda.

Raft: This raft floats next to the dock, and a pole to pilot it lies alongside it.

Roses: The roses that grow here can provide another key. See **Treasure,** page 101.

Stairway: The stairs lead over the channel, up to the veranda, and to the **Palace Interior.**

Perception (DC 8): Footprints of a booted humanoid lead from the grass up the stairs, although the dirt that indicates them on the bottom stairs diminishes as the tracks ascend.

Trees: Unusual tracks lead ashore near the trees. They are Oakstaff's tracks (Nature DC 8), which come out of the water, move onto the island, then turn around. Where the tracks turn around, the characters might find the footprints of a booted humanoid (Perception DC 13) leading to the stairway.

Palace Interior

When the characters enter the palace, read:

In the bright sunlight, the interior of the palace glows white through the rounded translucent ceiling, almost as though the entire structure were made of crystal. The water flowing from the roof has no apparent source, but it makes a strange, familiar music inside the palace. A short set of steps leads down from the veranda into a large oval chamber where two luxurious chairs stand at either end of a fine table. A crystal glass has been set at either place, and a crystal decanter stands upon a small silver platter on the table near the chair farthest from the steps. Two framed paintings hang upon the walls, flanking long stone shelves that hold tomes and other objects.

Arcana (DC 13): The structure is not magical, although the fountain on the dome's top is. The music it makes is part of the magic.

Dungeoneering (DC 20): The area of this room suggests that the stone floor here is very thick.

Perception (DC 8): The music is the same as the soft music of the crystals in the Crystal Cave.

Perception (DC 13): A set of footprints proceeds down the stairs and across the room. (These prints are the same booted ones that might have been found outside the palace.)

The characters are free to explore the room.

Trapdoor: Following the tracks discussed above to their endpoint reveals this door. Otherwise, searching might reveal it (Perception DC 13). If the characters open the trapdoor, go to **Orlando**.

Furniture: The furniture is normal but ornate.

Glasses, Decanter, and Tray: These items are exquisitely crafted. (See **Treasure,** page 101.) The decanter is half full of water, and the glass nearest the trapdoor also contains a little water. A character near this glass sees that water has been spilled on the table and on the floor near the trapdoor. Characters find the trapdoor right away if they search the area because of these clues.

Paintings: Each painting portrays a single figure. Although they are in separate paintings, the subjects appear to gaze fondly at each other. One painting shows a handsome man who has silver hair and wears lavish clothing. A glow of power surrounds him, and his laughing eyes glint with the spark of a keen intellect. The other portrays a beautiful female fey who has black hair and also dresses in a royal fashion. Serenity flows from her.

Tomes: These books are all by Porpherio. The tomes are numbered 1 to 194, and each covers a year of day-to-day life upon the island. Volume 194 reveals Porpherio's intent to entomb his soul. The journal's last lines read: *My life and power I seal into the tomb with Caerwyn's soul. Our devotion shall be preserved inside this eternal garden, which shall be preserved in turn. Blissful sleep shall be ours, forever, and the garden shall endure.*

Orlando

When the characters open the trapdoor, read:
As you open the hatch, the tip of a rapier pokes out and a male voice shouts, "Back! You'll not take me alive!"

As his eyes adjust to the light that floods into where he is hidden, a young, fit man lowers his blade. His expression changes from one of anger to one of confusion.

" Do I know you?" he says. "Do you know Juliana?"

The young man climbs out of the shaft and looks at the characters in bewilderment. Crystalbrookers recognize the man as Orlando, but his hair is silver like that of the man in the painting in this room—not black, as it actually is. One of his eyes is blue, and the other is green, but Orlando actually has two blue eyes.

Talking to Orlando

Orlando recognizes any Crystalbrookers among the party, but his full memory is beyond his grasp. Once he is made aware of Juliana's plight, he wants nothing more than to save her. In conversation with the characters, Orlando might say the following.

What happened to you? *"I awoke in a forest, and a lady with eyes like the sun drew me away before I knew what was happening. She took me to a hill with a lone tree atop it. A walking tree, Sir Oakstaff, my old friend . . . came and took me away. He brought me here today, saying I'd be safe. When I heard you coming, I hid in . . . well, there."*

Your old friend? Your secret place? *"Yes, this is my Water Palace. Magnificent, isn't it?"*

You think you're Porpherio? "*Think? I am Porpherio . . . aren't I? What are you driving at?"*

Why did you leave Caerwyn/Juliana? *"I'd never do that! Where is she? Is she with you?"*

You left her behind, didn't you? *"I don't remember seeing her. I saw only Rosaline when I awoke. Was Juliana there? Where is she now? I must find her!"*

The hag took her again. "*What? A hag? Then we must rescue her! Who's with me?"*

Don't you remember being part of the hag's ritual? "*No, I don't. I remember some bad dreams a few nights ago. Am I still dreaming?"*

Orlando seems less coherent than Juliana was. The characters likely have a key tool to free part of his memory—the locket found in Session 3. If the players don't remember it, the characters do, so feel free to remind them.

Orlando's Locket: If the characters give Orlando his locket, he suddenly remembers more. He recalls that Kalbon and Soryth captured him and Juliana when they emerged from the Crystal Cave three or four days ago. The villains took the couple to a hidden palace, keeping them prisoner for a day or so. Then the fiend bound them and took them to a garden house on the palace roof. The hag started to sing strange words, but soon after, a green giant rushed into the room alongside numerous fey. Orlando got free during the struggle, but there his memory fails him again.

The Porpherio aspect of Orlando can then tell the characters what Soryth was trying to do (and that one day on the isle equals a week in the world). He knows that he should be dead alongside Caerwyn. But his soul is now alive inside Kalbon and Orlando. Porpherio can confirm that the fiend the characters saw commanding Ariel at the lake is Kalbon.

Orlando/Porpherio's greatest priority is rescuing Caerwyn/Juliana. If the characters explain the request of the archfey agent they dealt with, he is willing to go along to see either Uma or Ragnar.

Ending the Discussion: Even if the characters fail to give Orlando his locket, he agrees to follow them back to the archfey agent the characters are aiding. Grateful to the characters for their current and potential help, Orlando points out the treasure they could glean from this place, beginning with mentioning the roses that grow on the palace grounds. As he is about to continue, Ragnar's cousin Basal arrives to kill Orlando. Continue with the **Verbeeg Dilemma** tactical encounter.

Verbeeg Dilemma

Encounter Level 4

Setup

Basal (B)
Orlando (O)
Trapdoor (T)

Basal arrives stealthily, but he does so to impress rather than surprise. Any character who has a passive Perception of 20 or higher notices the giant just before he speaks.

When Basal arrives, read:
"Well, my quarry is found, attending a party no less," says a thin, smirking giant that has appeared atop the steps. He has green skin and pointed ears, and hair and eyes the golden color of straw. He leans on a spear and loosely carries a wooden shield carved in the likeness of a laughing elf's face. His armor is the hide of some blue-furred beast, the fur turned inward.

"Ragnar sends his greetings, Orlando. I am Basal of the Green Fey. Many apologies for spoiling the party, but it's time for you to die."

Orlando looks on in shock, but Basal makes no immediate move.

The characters start within 2 squares of the trapdoor. They might realize that Basal is the same kind of creature as Ragnar. If the characters met Ragnar in Session 6, they might already know about verbeegs. If they didn't, they can attempt Arcana checks now to determine the following information about Basal.

Arcana (DC 13): This is a verbeeg, a fey giant, and a young one. Verbeegs are warriors and tricksters.

Arcana (DC 20): Verbeegs have a reputation for being sly bullies at best. They love games, but any verbeeg readily exploits loopholes in the rules.

Development

Killing Orlando is Basal's mission, but he is willing to talk first. Whether the heroes refuse to talk (because they are aiding Uma), or they reveal that Ragnar sent them, Basal offers a deal before they can attack him.

When he does, read:
Basal raises a hand and addresses you, saying, "I have a duty to fulfill, as it seems do you. We should contest for the prize, yes? Here's my proposal—we fight until one side is defeated or submits, and the victor gets Orlando. Fighting all of you at once seems fair to me.

"What say you? I am willing to listen to other terms for the combat, if you have suggestions."

Encourage the players to have their characters offer some different rules (presumably of a nonlethal variety). The verbeeg agrees to conditions such as fighting to subdue rather than kill and refraining from attacking Orlando unless Basal defeats the characters. If the characters don't want to offer any rules, Basal acts as described in "Tactics."

Basal is not willing for the characters to include Orlando on their side in the combat unless Orlando is a fair target during the fight. Orlando is Basal's first target if the characters refuse to cooperate. Orlando does not enjoy being excluded from the fight, but he abides by any arrangements the characters make.

Tactics

Basal: The verbeeg hunter attempts to dispatch Orlando first if the young man is part of the fight. If the rules allow Basal to kill Orlando, Basal asks for the fight to stop as soon as he does so.

Against multiple foes, Basal divides his attacks, since doing so is to his advantage with the recharge of *lunging sweep*. Basal fights to kill unless the characters asked for a different victory condition.

The verbeeg uses his mobility to divide the characters and escape defenders. Whenever he can, he

Basal, Verbeeg Hunter (B) Level 4 Solo Skirmisher
Large fey humanoid (giant)

HP 220; **Bloodied** 110 — **Initiative** +7
AC 18, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15 — **Perception** +8
Speed 8 — Low-light vision
Saving Throws +5; **Action Points** 2

Traits

Hunter's Agility
Basal can stand up from prone as a minor action.

Hunter's Resilience
Whenever Basal ends his turn, any dazing, stunning, or dominating effect upon him ends.

Verbeeg Stealth
Basal can make a Stealth check to become hidden as long as one square he occupies has superior cover or total concealment from the creature he is attempting to become hidden from.

Standard Actions

Spear (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 7 damage, and Basal shifts 1 square.

Bewildering Bolt (psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +7 vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + 5 psychic damage, and the target cannot attack Basal until the start of the target's next turn.

Hunter's Momentum ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Basal makes three basic attacks.

Move Actions

Bound ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Basal shifts up to 4 squares, and he can ignore difficult terrain and move through enemy spaces.

Minor Actions

Lunging Sweep (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** each time Basal hits three different targets with *hunter's momentum*
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +7 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, Basal knocks the target prone, and he can shift 1 square.

Triggered Actions

Sweeping Riposte (weapon) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Trigger: An enemy hits Basal with an attack.
Effect (Free Action): Basal uses *spear* against the triggering enemy. If he hits, he knocks the target prone.

Skills Athletics +12, Bluff +9, Stealth +10

Str 20 (+7)	**Dex** 16 (+5)	**Wis** 12 (+3)
Con 15 (+4)	**Int** 11 (+2)	**Cha** 14 (+4)

Alignment unaligned — **Languages** Common, Elven, Giant
Equipment hide armor, light shield, spear

Orlando (O)	**Level 2 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, human	
HP 40; **Bloodied** 20	**Initiative** +6
AC 16, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14	**Perception** +6
Speed 6	
Traits	
Skirmish	
If Orlando ends a move on his turn at least 3 squares from where he started the move, he deals 1d6 extra damage with melee attacks until the start of his next turn.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Rapier** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, and Orlando shifts 1 square.	
Skills Athletics +8, Diplomacy +9	
Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 16 (+4) **Wis** 10 (+1)	
Con 16 (+4) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 17 (+4)	
Alignment good **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment leather armor, rapier	

saves *sweeping riposte* for a foe that dares to attack him on his turn. *Skewer* is also useful for sliding a troublesome enemy away.

The giant gains combat advantage by knocking his foes prone. He attacks targets that are granting combat advantage to him whenever he can, risking opportunity attacks to do so as long as he is not bloodied. He can squeeze under the table to use *verbeeg stealth* to gain combat advantage, but this ploy works only once. When the characters are aware of it, they can look under the table to prevent its use.

Once Basal is bloodied, he attempts to kill Orlando unless the characters' rules prohibit him from doing so. (Basal's ground rules dictate that the victor takes Orlando, but don't specify in what state.) Characters can use Diplomacy or Intimidate (DC 20) to stop him. A successful Intimidate check (DC 20) can also cause a bloodied Basal to yield. When Basal has 45 hit points remaining, he yields. When he does so, Basal is not surrendering but merely ceasing hostilities. If the characters don't do the same, he renews his attacks.

Orlando: If Orlando is in the combat on the characters' side, a player chooses his actions and makes his attack rolls, damage rolls, and checks. Orlando attempts to defend himself if Basal attacks him.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light.

Bookshelf: Each stone bookshelf is 15 feet tall (Athletics DC 9 to climb). The shelves are carved out of the wall and cannot be moved.

Chairs and Table: Squares containing these furnishings are difficult terrain.

Stairs: The stairway is difficult terrain.

Trapdoor: Unless the characters close the trapdoor, its square is a 10-foot-deep pit with a ladder leading down into it.

Conclusion

When this encounter concludes, continue with **Ending the Session**.

Ending the Session

If Basal killed Orlando, he takes Orlando's head as proof for Ragnar. After resting and gaining rewards, the characters return to their archfey agent to begin the next session.

Reward

Each character gains 350 XP for finding Orlando, learning more, and battling Basal. If the characters saved Orlando, each gains 150 extra XP. Each character should now have 2,100 XP, or 2,250 XP if the party saved Orlando. Any character who has 2,250 XP advances to level 3.

Treasure: The characters need to pluck a leaf from one of the roses growing at the palace before they leave. If Orlando survived the encounter, he reminds the characters of this fact. His Porpherio aspect knows that the characters need the rose leaf. He knows why they need it only if he has his locket. They are now likely to have all the leaves necessary for entering the Palace of Spires in Session 10.

Several items in the Water Palace are valuable, including the crystal decanter and glasses (20 gp per PC). If the characters search the area or Orlando points out the treasures, they find one *potion of healing* on a bookshelf, as well as one item you pick for a specific character or roll on the Treasure Table, page 66.

Session 9: Resolution

After finding Orlando, the characters travel back to the archfey they agreed to help. Roleplay this scene, using the following as a guide.

Ill Met by Moonlight

When the characters return to the archfey, read:

Twilight descends over Porpherio's Garden again. The full moon begins to rise. On your way to the fey camp, you approach the toadstool ring through which you came to this isle. There, the pale light reveals large groups of fey. On the eastern bank is Uma with her nymphs and pixies. On the other side is Ragnar, satyrs and wilden at his flanks. Farther away, Oakstaff straddles the stream.

"Ill met by moonlight, proud Uma," Ragnar says. "The old knight summons us to speak."

"Speak of what, brash Ragnar?" Uma says. "Your haughty wrath extinguishes civil words and fans the flames of war between us."

"Here come the strangers," Ragnar says. "Let them speak. Then I'll have done with you."

"Peace," says Oakstaff. "Be still."

If Orlando is alive, read:

All eyes turn to Orlando.

"Come, dear one," says Uma. "We shall protect you." The dryad extends her hand to Orlando, but Ragnar pounds his spear on his shield.

"Think that you can protect him?" thunders the giant. "Bring him to me!"

"Peace!" booms Oakstaff. "Be still!"

The players can decide how to initiate conversation. If Orlando is dead, his head is in Basal's hands. Basal is at Ragnar's side if Basal survived his encounter with the characters but did not kill Orlando. The heroes might have Orlando's body if he died. If Orlando is dead and no one has his body, Uma sends her fey to fetch it. If either Basal or Orlando is not present, see the **Death and Honor** sidebar before going on to **Orlando Speaks.**

Death and Honor

Orlando's Death: If Orlando perished at the Water Palace, the ensuing dialogue reflects that fact. Uma sadly acknowledges the cost of her indecisiveness. Once the truth is clear, Ragnar curses his rash decision to "slay the boy." The archfey agents resolve, together, to see an end to the villainy that caused this grief.

Basal's Fate: If the characters killed Basal, Ragnar asks them for an explanation of the events. If the characters acted unfairly in the combat, Ragnar becomes suspicious no matter what they say. If the characters don't own up to their deeds, Orlando tells Ragnar the truth. The archfey is angered, but willing to wait until after Soryth is defeated to pursue a vendetta.

Orlando Speaks

If Orlando is alive and has his locket, he has become more lucid. Without his locket, Orlando is still befuddled. Uma takes a few minutes to soothe him, encouraging him and Porpherio to work as one to speak. If Orlando is dead, Ragnar takes a few minutes to perform a dark rite that forces Orlando's head to speak.

Orlando reveals that, even if he dies (or has died), his mixed soul should flee back to the tomb that Porpherio built to house his and Caerwyn's souls. The two souls within Otlando, his own and Porpherio's, are incomplete—part of each also resides within the fiendish Kalbon. This unusual fact, alongside Porpherio's old magic, should keep any of the mixed souls in this world. That means that Kalbon and Soryth can be slain without fear of losing the soul pieces within them.

If Orlando is alive, Ragnar admits aloud that it was an ill-conceived plot to kill the young human, since the souls would have stayed on the island. If Orlando had been killed, it would have been only a matter of time before Soryth and Kalbon discovered the soul in the tomb. Uma adds that, since the mixed souls remain intact outside the Shadowfell, safe from true death, the Fountain All Heal is, with certainty, able to restore all to its proper order.

After Orlando speaks, read:

After Uma and Ragnar have absorbed Orlando's words, they stand in silence for a long while.

"We have been careless," Uma says at last.

"And let that hag play us for fools," says Ragnar.

"I am sorry we bickered foolishly," Uma says.

"Vengeance shall alleviate my shame," Ragnar says. He turns to regard you. "These strangers have opened our eyes and proven themselves cunning champions."

"As well as able heroes," says Uma. "Able heroes who can go places from which we are now forbidden."

Ragnar considers her words and allows himself a feral grin. "The Palace of Spires is barred to us, but these bold ones have proven that they can bridge gaps we cannot."

"Well, what say you?" asks Uma as she extends her hand and smiles. "Would you care to have us in your debt?"

When the characters agree to take on Soryth, the agents promise a boon when the task is done—a drink from the Fountain All Heal (but without the usual drawback) for each character. The fountain binds a drinker to this island until death, but Uma claims she can counter that curse.

Mission Briefing

After the characters agree to confront Soryth, Ragnar and Uma, with their attendant fey, explain the mission to the characters.

- Reiterate from the **Adventure Background,** page 64, anything the players don't know, especially how Soryth can gain power over the island. If she and Kalbon absorb the souls in their entirety, they gain mastery over the isle and the Fountain All Heal. This event would be a potential disaster of cosmic proportions.
- The Palace of Spires is a demiplane. The Summer Fey, the Green Fey, and creatures native to this isle cannot enter it. To gain entry, the characters must navigate the palace's bramble maze to its center, and then use the keys on the sundial there. This is a good time to check on the keys the party has acquired (see **Treasure**).
- Experience has shown that Soryth has influence over some of the island's natives. It's very likely she has even more power over those within the Palace of Spires.
- Both archfey agents see any evil fey, such as Soryth's xivorts, as enemies that need to be dispatched. Uma begs the characters to spare any charmed creatures within the palace, however. Ragnar scoffs at this idea: "*War is war,*" he bellows. (If the characters killed Basal, he uses that "unnecessary death" as an example.)
- Once the characters defeat Soryth, the way for the fey to reach the island should be open again. They will come as quickly as possible to lead the characters to the Fountain All Heal.

When the briefing is done, read:

"You are brave to undertake this quest," Ragnar says. "Your chances of survival against Soryth are slim."

"Yet you are this island's last hope," Uma says. "If only we possessed something that once belonged to the hag, even a token, we could use it against her."

"No such luck, witch," says Ragnar.

The characters have *Soryth's bloodstone*, which they acquired in Session 4. If the players don't remember, one of the leprechauns present in that encounter is listening to the conversation, and she points it out.

When it is presented to them, Oakstaff, Uma, and Ragnar place an enchantment upon *Soryth's bloodstone.*

Uma then returns the stone to the characters, saying, "*Until the next moonrise, if you wield this token before Soryth, you shall suffer less at her hands. Display it so she can see it, and she shall know fear before you strike.*"

Soryth's Bloodstone

This crimson stone hums with fey power.

Property

You and allies within 10 squares of you gain a +2 bonus to saving throws against charm effects, fear effects, and illusion effects. You and such allies also take a -2 penalty to attack rolls against one another.

Utility Power (fear) ✦ **Daily** (Minor Action)

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, enemies within 10 squares of you that use powers that have the charm, fear, or illusion keyword take a -4 penalty to attack rolls with those powers and cannot score critical hits.

Treasure

For the characters' heroic efforts so far, Uma and Ragnar give the party a magic item. If the characters bested Basal but did not kill him, Ragnar requires his cousin to give this item. From the Treasure Table, page 66, pick an item for a specific character or roll on the table. The fey also give the characters one *potion of healing* and any keys they lack.

Development

Once the archfey agents have briefed and rewarded the characters, the fey begin to make camp on the spot. Uma and Ragnar retire with Oakstaff to discuss matters and make amends for their conflict. A small group of fey guides the characters to the edge of the maze that leads to the Palace of Spires, so that the characters can set out immediately upon waking. The fey help the party set up two tents, then depart.

Ask the characters how they set up camp and if they set any watches—find out who and when. Also important is if they keep a fire or other light source lit. As the party takes an extended rest, Soryth's xivorts attack. Continue with the **Dream Stealers** tactical encounter.

ORLANDO'S ROLE

If Orlando is alive, he is present during the preparations to infiltrate the palace, and he objects to being left out of the plans to rescue his love. Uma and Ragnar convince him that he must remain with the fey, out of Soryth's reach, but promise him that he can accompany them into the palace when Soryth falls.

Dream Stealers

Encounter Level 2

Setup

1 xivort shadow caller (C)
1 xivort net caster (N)
3 xivort slashers (S)
2 xivort darters (D)
2 rolling logs (L)

In the middle of the night, xivorts approach silently through the maze and then stealthily to the edge of the characters' camp. Any characters on watch who have a passive Perception of 17 or higher become aware of the approach. They can warn the other characters and stand up, but when the battle starts, characters who were sleeping are still prone.

If no character senses the monsters, or no watch is set, the xivorts gain a surprise round. In this case, all the characters start prone.

Characters begin within the start area on the map. Some should be inside the tents.

Two xivort slashers have a rolling log (see below). Rather than rolling initiative for the slashers as a group, roll separate initiative for each one.

2 Xivort Darters (D) **Level 1 Artillery**
Small fey humanoid

HP 22; **Bloodied** 11 — **Initiative** +2
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13 — **Perception** +1
Speed 5 — Darkvision

Standard Actions

Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage.

Dart (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage.

Dart Volley (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The darter uses *dart* twice.

Dream Venom Dart (poison, weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Triggered Actions

Darter's Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the darter hits it.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The darter teleports 2 squares.

Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment dagger, 4 darts

Xivort Shadow Caller (C) **Level 2 Artillery (Leader)**
Small fey humanoid

HP 32; **Bloodied** 16 — **Initiative** +3
AC 16, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13 — **Perception** +6
Speed 5 — Darkvision

Standard Actions

Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d4 + 4 damage.

Shadow Phantoms (fear, implement, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +7 vs. Will, with a +1 bonus per creature adjacent to the target
Hit: 1d8 + 4 psychic damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of the shadow caller's next turn.

Deathmark Bolt (implement, necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +7 vs. Will
Hit: 1d8 + 4 necrotic damage, and one of the shadow caller's allies adjacent to the target can make a melee basic attack against the target as a free action.

Shadow Strangler (implement) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +7 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target is immobilized and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends both).

Triggered Actions

Shadow Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the shadow caller hits it.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The shadow caller teleports to another square adjacent to the triggering enemy.

Str 11 (+1) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+1)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 17 (+4) **Cha** 16 (+4)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment dagger, wand

When the xivorts attack, read:
Small blue-skinned, orange-eyed creatures hoot and give battle cries as they pour out of the darkness. The couple in front giggle maniacally as they start to roll logs downhill from the forest near the maze entrance.

Tactics

The xivorts are unwilling to surrender, but survivors might retreat if the fight goes badly.

Xivort Net Caster (N) **Level 1 Controller**
Small fey humanoid

HP 26; **Bloodied** 13 — **Initiative** +3
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13 — **Perception** +1
Speed 5 — Darkvision

Traits

Cruel Slasher
The net caster gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls against prone, immobilized, slowed, or restrained enemies.

Standard Actions

Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.

Net (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Area burst 1 within 5 (creatures in burst); +5 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target is restrained (save ends).

Minor Actions

Bolas (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +5 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target falls prone and cannot stand up until the end of the net caster's next turn.

Triggered Actions

Shadow Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the net caster hits it.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The net caster teleports to another square adjacent to the triggering enemy.

Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment leather armor, short sword, 2 bolas, 4 nets

3 Xivort Slashers (S) **Level 1 Skirmisher**
Small fey humanoid

HP 26; **Bloodied** 13 **Initiative** +4
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13 **Perception** +1
Speed 5 Darkvision

Standard Actions

⨁ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.

⨁ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage.

Triggered Actions

Cunning Step ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the slasher is hit by an attack.
Effect (Free Action): The slasher shifts 1 square.

Shadow Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the slasher hits it.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The slasher teleports to another square adjacent to the triggering enemy.

Skills Bluff +5, Stealth +7
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment leather armor, short sword, 4 daggers

Xivort Shadow Caller: Leading from the rear, the shadow caller uses its powers primarily to provide easier targets for its allies.

Xivort Slashers: On its first turn, each slasher adjacent to a log rolls the log into the characters or the camp. Then they join the fray, attacking characters who are granting combat advantage or threatening the darters or the shadow caller.

2 Rolling Logs (L) **Single-Use Terrain**

Standard Action

Special: A log is 1 square wide by 3 squares long. Its space is difficult terrain.
Requirement: A creature must be adjacent to and uphill from the long side of the log. The attack must originate from a square of the log adjacent to the target.
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +4 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d4 + 4 damage, and the target is knocked prone.
Effect: The log continues to occupy the space at the blast's edge farthest downhill from the origin square.

Xivort Net Caster: This xivort targets an obvious defender first, trying to bind that character so that his or her skills are of little benefit in restricting other xivorts' movement.

Xivort Darters: These creatures avoid melee. They shift and use *dream venom dart* against melee attackers that come too close.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Dim moonlight unless the campfire is lit. It provides bright light out to 6 squares.

Bushes and Debris: The small plants and fallen trees are difficult terrain.

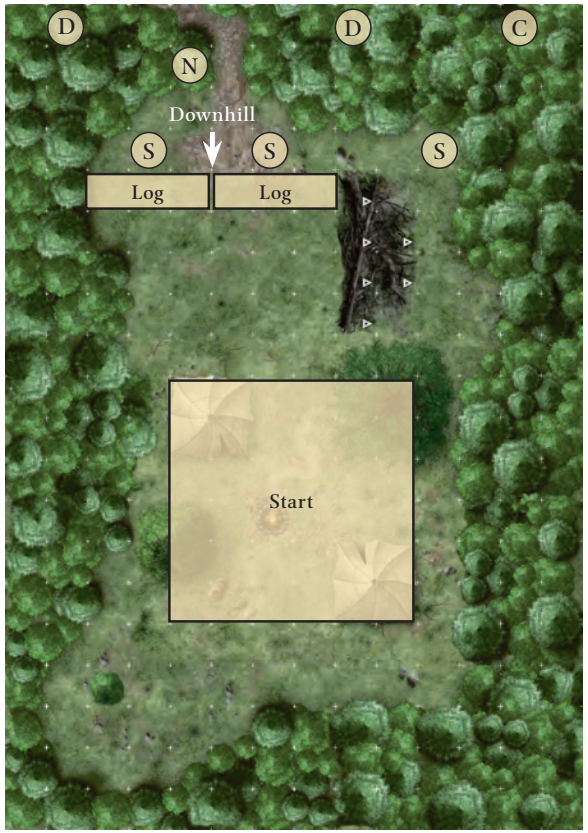
Campfire: A creature that ends its movement (forced or otherwise) or ends its turn in the fire takes 5 fire damage.

Forest: These trees are 20 feet high (Athletics DC 9 to climb). Undergrowth and thick canopy leaves render the forested area lightly obscured.

Tents: These shelters are difficult terrain, and they collapse if anyone or anything enters their space.

Conclusion

The session ends when the xivorts are defeated. Continue with **Ending the Session**.



Ending the Session

After the encounter concludes, the characters finish an extended rest. They begin the next session by journeying to the maze.

Reward

At the end of the session, each character gains 200 XP for establishing peace between the archfey agents, planning the mission, and defeating Soryth's xivorts. A character who began this session with 2,100 XP now has 2,300 XP and advances to level 3.

Session 10: The Maze

The maze's hedge walls are 15 feet high and 10 or more feet thick. Although they seem like intertwined thorny rose bushes, they are immune to damage. A character who attempts to climb (Athletics DC 13) or remain atop the hedges takes 1d6 damage for each round it does so. A character atop or above the wall sees none of the maze's pathways.

Characters can navigate the maze by making choices at decision points. They can roll skill checks to better determine the route. If the characters have the *lesser tuathan road whistle* from Session 2, the fey magic of the whistle interacts favorably with the maze. The whistle falls out from among the gear of the character carrying it. It keeps falling out until the characters use its power. If they do, they occasionally see hints of a glowing path, so they gain a +2 bonus to skill checks made to navigate the maze.

When the characters enter the maze, read:
The maze walls are thick hedges more than a dozen feet high, bristling with needlelike thorns. Abundant tiny red roses, yellow roses, and white roses bloom on the hedges, filling each corridor with a sweet smell. Soon, the main route branches into three separate passageways. White roses line the eastern passage, with yellow roses to the north and red roses to the south.

Three Paths

Here the characters can choose whether to enter the **Eastern Path**, the **Northern Path**, or the **Southern Path.** After the chosen path is resolved, go to **Obstacles.**

Nature (DC 13): Red and white roses here give off a heavy scent. The yellow roses just smell sweet. (The character has mistaken the intense red rose scent for that of the white roses.)

Nature (DC 21): The overwhelming floral perfume of the red roses all but hides the fact that the white roses give off no discernible scent.

Eastern Path (White)

If the characters choose this path, read:
Following the hedge wall around, the eastern path stays near the perimeter of the maze. The white roses along the way are pleasant to look at but have no scent.

The characters suffer no adverse effects from the white roses.

Northern Path (Yellow)

If the characters choose this path, read:
The northern path leads near the heart of the maze, where yellow roses bloom in great numbers. As you journey, the perfume of the yellow roses sets your mind wandering and your course drifting.

The characters travel a circuitous route before finding their way. Each character loses a healing surge and must make a DC 13 Endurance check. Failure on the check subjects the character to the effect of the yellow rose perfume.

Yellow Rose Perfume
Effect: The target takes a -2 penalty to Perception checks until the end of the next encounter. Until then, whenever the target is bloodied, it is also slowed (save ends).

Southern Path (Red)

If the characters choose this path, read:
At first, the path of red roses seems to lead directly into the heart of the maze. But as you travel, the sickly sweet perfume overcomes your senses, sending you off course.

Dead ends and retraced steps confound the characters. Each character loses a healing surge and must make a DC 13 Endurance check. Failure on the check subjects the character to the effect of the yellow rose perfume.

Red Rose Perfume
Effect: The target takes a -2 penalty to Perception checks until the end of the next encounter. Until then, whenever the target becomes bloodied, it also takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Obstacles

After the rose path is resolved, read:
The path leads to a thick wall of dead, thorny branches that blocks further progress. Gaps in the branches show that the path continues on the other side. To the right is a ragged hole in the hedge wall, cutting through several corridors as if some monstrous beast carved a path through the hedges.

Arcana (DC 13): The dead branches give off a magical aura, while the hole in the hedges does not.

Arcana (DC 21): The magic is hard to classify, perhaps because it affects the mind. Maybe the dead branches are less physical trouble than they seem.

The characters can try **Crossing the Dead Wall** or take their chances with **Holes in the Hedges**.

Crossing the Dead Wall

The dead wall of thorns is a solid illusion, treacherous only to those who believe in it. Characters have some options to cross it—each character must make a check. Those who try to cross the dead wall by flying or teleporting must attempt the Insight check.

Acrobatics (DC 21): Avoiding thorns, the character squeezes through gaps in the branches.

Arcana (DC 21): Manipulating the magic of the wall, the character passes through, granting a +2

bonus to checks made to pass through the wall from this point on.

Athletics (DC 21): Avoiding thorns, the character climbs over the wall.

Insight (DC 13): With faith, the character walks right into the wall and through it. A character who fails this check while flying or teleporting ends up disoriented and with the mistaken impression of having passed through the dead wall.

Success: The character makes it through the dead wall unscathed and reaches the center of the maze.

Failure: Scratched severely, the character loses a healing surge.

Continue with **The Sundial.**

Holes in the Hedges

When the characters try this route, they find it easy for a few minutes. At the next hole, however, the hedges start to shift around the characters. Each character loses a healing surge.

The maze is realigning itself to foil the characters. They can attempt to counter this threat in a few ways. Each character must attempt one check, but no one can succeed on an Endurance check until the party succeeds on at least one other check. If the party succeeds on all three DC 21 checks, those attempting Endurance checks from that point on gain a +2 bonus to those checks.

Arcana (DC 21): The character manipulates the magic of the maze to slow the changes so the characters can move through with less impediment.

Insight (DC 21): A malign intelligence seems to be moving the hedges, and using this insight, the character predicts the movements.

Perception (DC 21): As the maze shifts, hints on the grassy ground allow the character to see the old path and find the way.

Endurance (DC 13): The character rushes after those leading the way.

Success: The character makes it through the shifting passages unscathed and reaches the center of the maze.

Failure: The effort winds the character, costing him or her an additional healing surge.

Continue with **The Sundial.**

The Sundial

When the characters reach the center of the maze, read:

A clearing occupies the maze's center. In the middle of this clearing, a short stone pillar, fashioned in the shape of a dragon's claw, supports a square stone sundial. Depressions shaped like different plants—shamrock, oak, mistletoe, and rose—decorate the sundial, one at each corner.

When the characters retrieve the keys from their packs, they notice that one of each type has turned to silver and taken the exact shape of one of the depressions in the sundial.

When the characters place the keys, read:

As you place the leaves in the grooves, the leaves glow and hum in unison. Then, two dark holes limned in purple light appear in the air, and blue-gray clawed hands reach out of the holes. Each one snatches a different key. Several paces away, you spot the rest of the creatures, each a foul little goblinlike monster reaching half its arm into another hole in space. Both yank their arms back, clutching your keys, and sprint into the maze, laughing gleefully.

Arcana (DC 13): These creatures are boggles, evil fey that like to torment people.

Pursuing the Boggles

The boggles intend to lead the party into an ambush. When the characters pursue, they must attempt a special DC 13 group skill check. Each character can choose one skill from among Athletics, Endurance, Insight, and Perception.

Adjust the **Boggle Ambush** tactical encounter according to the result of this group check.

All of the characters succeed: The heroes stay so close to the boggles that the creatures are forced to fight sooner than they had hoped. Remove the blink trickster and the dew frond from the encounter.

Half or more of the characters succeed: The boggles almost succeed, but the party catches up too soon. Remove the dew frond from the encounter.

Fewer than half of the characters succeed: The boggles are waiting for the characters. Run the encounter as written.

Continue with the **Boggle Ambush** tactical encounter on the next page.

Boggle Ambush

Encounter Level 2, 3, or 5

Setup

1 boggle blink trickster (B)
1 boggle sight stealer (S)
3 boggle chase tricksters (C)
1 dew frond hazard (D)

The result of **Pursuing the Boggles** tells you the number of enemies in this encounter. Place only those monsters the characters can see.

Boggle Blink Trickster (B) — **Level 4 Artillery**
Small fey humanoid

HP 43; **Bloodied** 21 — **Initiative** +7
AC 18, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 14 — **Perception** +9
Speed 6, climb 6 — Darkvision
Resist 5 fire

Traits

Dimensional Window
The boggle can make Thievery checks against any creature within 10 squares of it that it is aware of.

Standard Actions

⨭ **Dimension Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 10 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage.

Double Diversion Trick ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Effect: The boggle uses *dimension claw* twice.

Move Actions

Dimension Hop (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The boggle teleports up to 3 squares.

Triggered Actions

Teleport Trick ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The boggle takes damage from a melee attack.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The boggle teleports up to 3 squares.

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +12, Thievery +12
Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 20 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 13 (+3) **Int** 5 (-1) **Cha** 6 (+0)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

As the characters catch up to the boggles, read:
The creatures finally give up running from you. Laughing, they turn to fight. Echoes of their laughter come from other parts of the maze, suggesting they have friends nearby.

Boggle Sight Stealer (S) — **Level 3 Lurker**
Small fey humanoid

HP 37; **Bloodied** 18 — **Initiative** +10
AC 17, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 13 — **Perception** +8
Speed 6, climb 6 — Darkvision
Resist 5 fire

Traits

Dimensional Window
The boggle can make Thievery checks against any creature within 10 squares of it that it is aware of.

Standard Actions

⨭ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage.

⨭ **Neck Bite** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature grabbed by the boggle); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d6 + 8 damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Peek-a-Boo Trick (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The boggle must have no creature grabbed.
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: The boggle teleports the target to an unoccupied square within 2 squares of the boggle, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 13). The target is blinded until the grab ends. The boggle must remain within 2 squares of the target for the grab to persist.

Move Actions

Dimension Hop (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The boggle teleports up to 3 squares.

Triggered Actions

⨭ **Face Rip** (teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: A creature grabbed by the boggle escapes the grab.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): Melee 2 (triggering creature). The target takes 1d8 + 5 damage, and the boggle teleports up to 3 squares.

Skills Athletics +8, Stealth +11, Thievery +11
Str 15 (+3) **Dex** 20 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 5 (-2) **Cha** 6 (-1)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

If the dew frond can be seen, read:
A plant with long, multipart, swordlike fronds and a stalk with blood-red fruit occupies the middle of the maze here.

Nature (DC 14): This plant is a dew frond, a predator that reacts to nearby creatures by stabbing and grabbing them with its fronds. It then sucks blood.

Nature (DC 21): The dew frond is vulnerable to fire and cuts those who fail to escape it.

Dew Frond (D) — **Level 4 Hazard**
Object

Detect automatic; Nature DC 14 to identify
HP 40
AC 16, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 10
Immune psychic, forced movement, all conditions; **Vulnerable** 5 fire

Triggered Actions

⨭ **Grasping Frond** ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The dew frond must have no more than two creatures grabbed.
Trigger: A creature the dew frond is not grabbing starts its turn within 2 squares of the dew frond.
Attack (Opportunity Action): Melee 2 (the triggering creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 damage, the dew frond grabs the target (escape DC 14; see also Countermeasures), and the target takes ongoing 5 damage until it escapes.

Countermeasures

✦ **Delay:** Nature DC 21 (free action 1/round); the dew frond does not attack on this turn.
✦ **Release:** Nature DC 21 (minor action) or DC 14 (standard action); the dew frond releases one creature it is grabbing.

Tactics

All the boggles are aware of the dew frond's melee reach. They don't willingly come that close.

Blink Trickster: This creature uses *dimension hop* to stay mobile, attacking from a different direction as often as possible.

Chase Tricksters: These creatures attack in concert with other boggles, using *foot snare trick* to hinder

escape and *chase trick* to maneuver foes into poor tactical positions, such as near the dew frond.

Sight Stealer: This creature prefers to pair with a chase trickster to flank and use *peek-a-boo trick* as often as possible.

3 Boggle Chase Tricksters (C) **Level 4 Skirmisher**	
Small fey humanoid	
HP 53; **Bloodied** 26	**Initiative** +9
AC 18, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 14	**Perception** +9
Speed 6, climb 6	Darkvision
Resist 5 fire	
Traits	
Dimensional Window	
The boggle can make Thievery checks against any creature within 10 squares of it that it is aware of.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage.	
Move Actions	
Dimension Hop (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The boggle teleports up to 3 squares.	
Minor Actions	
⸸ **Foot-Snare Trick** ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Effect: Melee 1 (one creature flanked by the boggle). If the target moves more than 3 squares during its next turn, it falls prone at the end of that turn.	
Triggered Actions	
Chase Trick (charm) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied	
Trigger: A creature misses the boggle with a melee attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The boggle shifts up to 3 squares and then pulls the triggering creature to a square adjacent to it. The triggering creature's movement provokes opportunity attacks. If the creature ends this movement without taking damage from an attack, it can make a melee basic attack against the boggle as a free action.	
Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +12, Thievery +12	
Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 20 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+4)	
Con 13 (+3) **Int** 5 (-1) **Cha** 6 (+0)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin	

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright daylight.

Hedge Walls: The trees and brambles on the map represent hedge walls, which are blocking terrain that is 15 feet high and bristling with thorns. A creature that attempts to climb (Athletics DC 13) or remain atop the wall takes 1d6 damage for each round it does so. If a creature is forced to move to a hedge wall square, that creature takes 1d6 damage, and its movement stops in the square it was in before it would have entered the hedge wall.

Conclusion

After the characters defeat the boggles, the party can take a short rest, search for treasure (see **Reward**), reclaim the keys from the boggles, and return to the sundial. When they place the keys into the sundial a second time, go to **Ending the Session**.

Reward

Each character gains 300 XP for navigating the maze and battling the boggles.

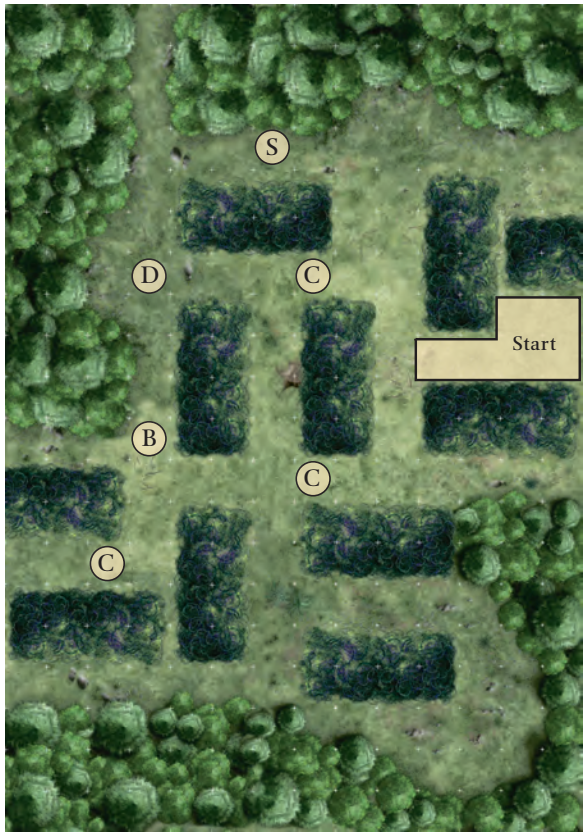
Treasure: The keys are silver (20 gp per character) and remain with the characters after they pass beyond the maze. One boggle carries a magic item you determine using the Treasure Table, page 66.

Ending the Session

When the party replaces the keys, read:

The last of the leaves fits into its matching groove, and the maze around the clearing starts to spin. Faster and faster it turns, until the hedge walls are nothing more than a green blur. Soon, the maze is spinning so rapidly that the walls vanish entirely . . . along with the rest of the maze.

The adventure resumes in session 11.



Session 11: The Garden

In the previous session, the characters navigated the hedge maze and used the sundial to leave the maze for parts unknown. In this session, they arrive in the palace garden, where they must deal with the garden defenders and figure out how to enter the palace.

When everyone is ready to begin, read:

When the spinning stops, you find yourselves in a short tunnel of white stone. Behind you, through two wrought iron gates, the ironwork shaped like an elaborate labyrinth, is a meadow, a lake, and the Water Palace. Ahead sprawls a lush walled garden, exploding with color. Flowers of every variety bloom in dreamlike hues beneath countless hovering butterflies. The flowers' fragrant perfume floats in the still air like the faint, sweet music that plays from the corner bowers where the garden's walls intersect.

A shallow, mirrorlike pool filled with golden fish spans the garden's middle. To either side of the pool, walkways of stones and pebbles create straight avenues around the flowerbeds, eventually converging at another gate on the opposite end of the pool. The far gate closes off a marble stairway that leads to the silvery double doors of a magnificent white palace, which towers above the glorious scene.

Suddenly, it becomes apparent that you are not alone in the garden.

Continue with the **Garden Defenders** tactical encounter.

Garden Defenders

Encounter Level 4

Setup

1 boggle body snatcher (B)
2 human berserkers (H)
1 xivort shadow caller (C)
2 xivort slashers (S)
4 musical bowers (M)

When the characters enter the garden, read:

Two burly, red-headed humans approach the gate. Each is clad in leather and has a golden circlet upon his head, which seems out of place. The hefty axe in each one's hands, however, seems fitting.

2 Xivort Slashers (S)	**Level 1 Skirmisher**
Small fey humanoid	
HP 26; **Bloodied** 13	**Initiative** +4
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13	**Perception** +1
Speed 5	Darkvision
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.	
➢ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Cunning Step ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the slasher is hit by an attack.	
Effect (Free Action): The slasher shifts 1 square.	
Shadow Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the slasher hits it.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The slasher teleports to another square adjacent to the triggering enemy.	
Skills Bluff +5, Stealth +7	
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 12 (+1)	
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment leather armor, short sword, 4 daggers	

Three of Soryth's blue-skinned xivort lackeys also lurk here, along with one of the gray-skinned boggles. These fey hoot and cheer as the humans move forward.

Insight (DC 13): The humans seem calm, as if they are wandering in a dream. Their eyes are glazed.

Characters begin in the start area. The creatures attack immediately, but see "Development."

Development

Human Berserkers: These brothers, Hamish and Argus, are from Crystalbrook, and Soryth's fey magic is controlling them. Crystalbrookers recognize the two as members of the original search party who were not found among the dead in the **Cave of Mud** (page 74). Sildaine characters might recognize the two (History DC 9).

2 Human Berserkers (H)	**Level 4 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid	
HP 66; **Bloodied** 33	**Initiative** +4
AC 16, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15	**Perception** +2
Speed 7	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Greataxe** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d12 + 9 damage, or 1d12 + 21 if the berserker scores a critical hit.	
➢ **Handaxe** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Battle Fury ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: The berserker is first bloodied.	
Effect (Free Action): The berserker can charge. After it charges or chooses not to, it uses *greataxe* with a +4 bonus to the attack roll and the damage roll.	
Skills Athletics +11, Endurance +10	
Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+2)	
Con 16 (+5) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	
Equipment leather armor, greataxe, 2 handaxes	

When Hamish or Argus is first bloodied, he snaps out of his charmed state, and after that a Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check (DC 15) can cause him to cease fighting. The brothers recognize Crystalbrookers instantly, granting such characters a +4 bonus to these checks. Tuathans and barbarians, with whom the brothers feel a kinship, gain a +2 bonus to these checks.

Boggle Body Snatcher (B) **Level 5 Controller**
Small fey humanoid

HP 61; **Bloodied** 30 — **Initiative** +7
AC 19, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 15 — **Perception** +9
Speed 6, climb 6 — Darkvision
Resist 5 fire

Traits

Dimensional Window
The boggle can make Thievery checks against any creature within 10 squares of it that it is aware of.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage.

Body Snatch (charm) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +8 vs. Will
Hit: The target is dominated (save ends). Until the target saves against this effect, the boggle is removed from play, and the target gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls. When the effect ends, the boggle returns to play in an unoccupied space of its choice within 5 squares of the target.

Move Actions

Dimension Hop (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The boggle teleports up to 3 squares.

Minor Actions

Boggle Sweat Stain ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: The boggle's current square is greased until the end of the encounter. Whenever any creature other than a boggle willingly enters the greased square, that creature falls prone.

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +12, Thievery +12
Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 20 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 13 (+3) **Int** 5 (-1) **Cha** 6 (+0)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

In any event, Soryth's magic prohibits Hamish and Argus from joining the fight on the characters' side, but if properly influenced, they cease fighting and move away from the fray.

Tactics

Boggle Body Snatcher: This creature tries to use *body snatch* on the mightiest adventurer. It leaves a *boggle sweat stain* in any place an enemy might have to move through.

Xivort Shadow Caller (C) **Level 2 Artillery (Leader)**
Small fey humanoid

HP 32; **Bloodied** 16 — **Initiative** +3
AC 16, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13 — **Perception** +6
Speed 5 — Darkvision

Standard Actions

⊕ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d4 + 4 damage.

Shadow Phantoms (fear, implement, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +7 vs. Will, with a +1 bonus per creature adjacent to the target
Hit: 1d8 + 4 psychic damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of the shadow caller's next turn.

Deathmark Bolt (implement, necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +7 vs. Will
Hit: 1d8 + 4 necrotic damage, and one of the shadow caller's allies adjacent to the target can make a melee basic attack against the target as a free action.

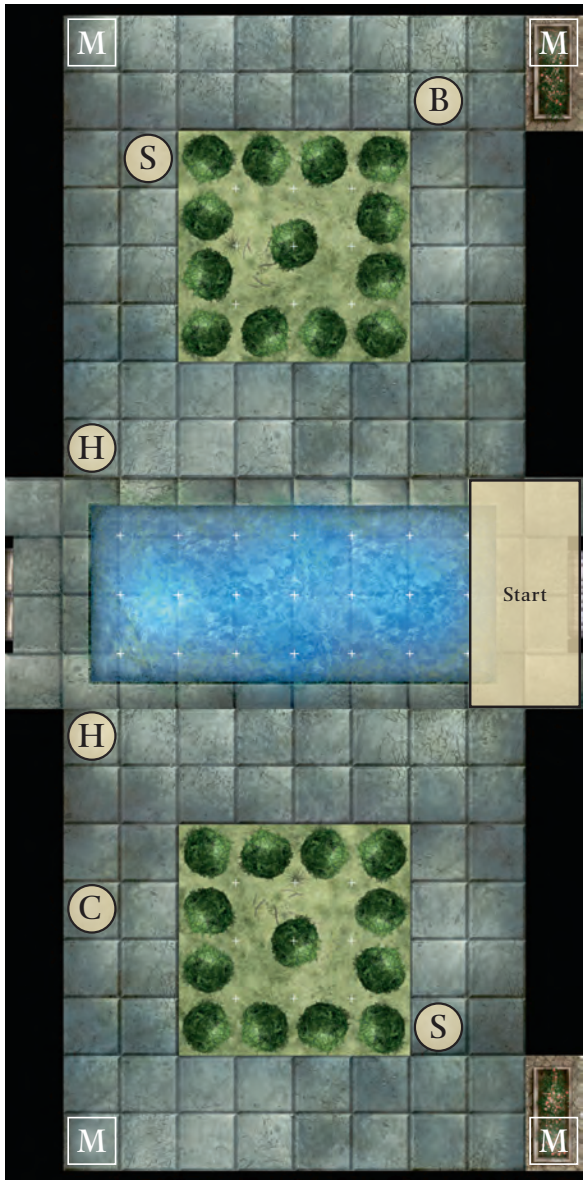
Shadow Strangler (implement) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +7 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target is immobilized and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends both).

Triggered Actions

Shadow Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the shadow caller hits it.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The shadow caller teleports to another square adjacent to the triggering enemy.

Str 11 (+1) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+1)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 17 (+4) **Cha** 16 (+4)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment dagger, wand

Human Berserkers: Hamish and Argus engage in toe-to-toe fighting until circumstances dictate otherwise (see "Development" above).



Xivort Shadow Caller: This creature maneuvers to keep allies between itself and enemies.

Xivort Slashers: These creatures attempt to provide flanking for the other melee combatants.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright daylight.

Musical Bowers (M): Sweet, soporific music plays from the corner bowers. Any creature that moves adjacent to or into a bower's square can gain 5 temporary hit points, but if it does so, it grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn.

Flowerbeds: Once per flowerbed, the first time a creature enters the bed, dozens of butterflies take wing, rendering the area lightly obscured until the end of the triggering creature's next turn.

Pool: This shallow water is difficult terrain.

Walls: The garden walls are 30 feet high and constructed of smooth, white stone (Athletics DC 25 to climb). Anyone who climbs over the wall to the outside ends up back inside the garden.

Conclusion

The characters can continue to explore the garden. Have them do so (continue with **Hamish and Argus**) before they take a short rest.

Hamish and Argus

The two berserker brothers might be a source of information if they both survived the encounter. If one brother died, the survivor is inconsolable. He ignores the party, unless he is somehow compelled to speak, and mutters about the doom that searching for Orlando brought down on everyone. If both brothers survived, they have a story to tell, which goes like this.

The search party from Crystalbrook found the Crystal Cave and managed to avoid the ochre jelly. (They encountered no echo spirit.) When the party came to the muddy cave, the mud men divided and overwhelmed the party members. Cut off from the others, Hamish and Argus retreated farther into the cavern. They successfully passed through the Crystal Cave's waterfall.

When they came to the fairy ring, they went on. Soon after, they ran afoul of Kalbon, who surprised and defeated them without any help. Then, the fiend brought them to the hag. She ensorcelled the two, and everything since has been like a nightmare that escapes clear memory.

The brothers can describe Kalbon (page 115), who usually lurks in the palace's grand hall. They warn that he is an awesome fighter who grows tougher if he severely wounds (bloodies) or knocks his foes unconscious. When he is injured, he is capable of setting the air near him on fire.

Features of the Garden

The garden contains the following features. Point them out as the characters explore. Back through the entry tunnel, the iron gates leading outside the palace grounds are magically locked. At present, they cannot be opened.

Flowerbeds

The flowerbeds that flank the pool contain blooms of every color and kind imaginable, arranged in pleasing patterns and covered in butterflies. If they search the flowerbeds, the characters might find a special flower that can help them in the next session.

Perception (DC 21): In one of the flowerbeds is an extraordinary flower that slowly changes color. Uma wore such a flower as a decoration on her gown.

Arcana (DC 13): This flower is a rare Senaliesse chrysanthemum, said to grow in the Summer Queen's court. A person who openly wears this flower is often regarded as a friend of the fey.

Musical Bowers

Soft music plays from the crystal bowers in the corners of the garden, where tiny crystals are embedded in the walls. Cushioned seats carved in the walls here invite rest and sleep.

Perception (DC 13): Music here sounds just like the song of the crystals from the Crystal Cave, but here in the Feywild, instead of tinkling crystalline notes, it seems as though a chorus of tiny voices is humming this melody.

Arcana (DC 13): The music is magical, and it contains a restful, healing charm. Taking a brief respite here could energize you and your companions.

If the party takes a short rest here, each character regains 5 extra hit points for each healing surge he or she spends. At the end of the short rest, each character must attempt an Endurance check (DC 9).

If half or more of the characters succeed: The temptation to rest longer is strong, but the characters rouse themselves.

If fewer than half of the characters succeed: The music of the bowers lulls the characters into a hypnotic trance. Each character grants combat advantage until the end of his or her first turn in the **Horned King** tactical encounter in session 12.

Palace Doors

The mirrored doors at the opposite end of the pool from where the characters entered are the only apparent way into the Palace of Spires. The upper stories of the palace along this side of the garden (Athletics DC 25 to climb) have dozens of long windows, but they are constructed of raw force and do not permit entry.

When the characters approach the doors, read:
Polished mirrored metal on the palace doors reflect the beautiful garden and the pool, which itself reflects the upper reaches of the castle. The doors fail to display images of you, however, and they have neither handles nor keyholes. Above the doors, carved into the stone in Elven, are the words "To thine own self be true."

Two tall columns—each carved to resemble a female elf warrior holding a scimitar—flank the doors like guards at attention.

Passive Perception (DC 13): The reflecting pool displays your images as if the pool were the doors.

Arcana (DC 9): The doors are magically locked and unlikely to be forced open. Some kind of magical trigger must be needed to open them.

Arcana (DC 21): The warrior maiden columns are magical—probably guardians of some sort. They are likely to be aggressive only if the palace is attacked.

The doors are locked. Opening them is a puzzle that the characters must solve. Doing so must be accomplished at the **Reflecting Pool**. No creature in the garden knows the secret of opening the doors. Soryth refuses to reveal the secret to her servants, and she has never revealed it to a slave.

Reflecting Pool

The shallow pool is filled with golden fish. While it is undisturbed, the pool reflects like a mirror.

When a character examines the pool, read:
The pool reflects the palace perfectly. Your reflection is familiar, but it is an idealized version of you, the way you might wish to be depicted in a portrait. As you look on, you begin to feel as though you are engaging in a staring contest with another actual person.

The reflections do exactly what the characters do, except they do not mimic speech. They respond to questions and requests with gestures and movements,

such as nods. If a character asks his or her reflection to move away to another area, such as through the doors toward the palace, it does so. It opens the doors in the reflected view of that place—and the doors open in the real world.

When a character's reflection carries out the proper instructions, read:
Your reflection nods and vanishes from the pool. The reflection reappears in the mirrored palace doors. With a bow, the reflection reaches forward as if grasping a handle on each door. A moment later, the palace doors open wide.

The warrior maiden statues speak in unison, saying, "Enter in peace."

If the characters want to explore further, allow them to do so. When they're ready to continue, go to **Ending the Session**.

Ending the Session

The session ends after a character's reflection opens the palace's mirrored doors.

Reward

Each character gains 350 XP for battling the garden defenders. If they spared Hamish and Argus and gained information from the brothers, each character gains 100 extra XP. Also, note this act of mercy—it is important in session 12.

Treasure: The golden circlets Hamish and Argus wear are fine eladrin items worth a total of 50 gp per character. If the brothers survived, they are glad to give the items to the characters. Otherwise, characters can just take the circlets. If only one of the brothers survived, he could not care less about the jewelry.

Session 12: Grand Hall

The characters start this session just as they are about to enter the palace proper. In this session, the players can use the map to visualize which areas of the grand hall they are exploring.

Solving the Hall

This session contains a few puzzles that unlock areas and events. Here is a summary of what the characters must do.

1. Stow weapons and implements in the **Entry Hall** in order to gain admission to the palace.
2. Teach the birds in the **Master Bedroom** the song of the crystals.
3. Remove the soot and blood from the sun mosaic in the **Steward's Quarters**.

When the characters accomplish either the second or the third task and return to the **Entry Hall**, begin the **Horned King** tactical encounter, below. When the characters have accomplished both the second and third tasks and returned to the **Entry Hall**, go to **The Fountain**, page 116.

Entry Hall

The characters start outside the Palace of Spires.

When everyone is ready to begin, read:
At the top of the stairs that lead to the mirrored doors, a smaller set of steps goes into a grand hall beyond. Even from outside, you can tell the hall is a place of air and light. Broad rays of sunlight stream from skylights above, causing the white marble to glow. In the room, upon a large, ornate rug, four chairs stand around a table set with a crystal decanter and four glasses. At the other end of the hall, twin jets of water burst from a circular fountain and spiral through the air, as though the water is alive. Two doors exit the chamber, one to the left and another to the right. From the left door comes the squawking of birds.

As you move to enter the hall, the female elf warrior statues that flank the door again intone, in perfect unison, "Enter in peace."

Characters who try to pass while wielding weapons or implements encounter an invisible barrier of force that prevents them from entering. Those who stow all such items in a sheath, scabbard, pouch or other container can enter the hall freely. Only a staff, which might be used for walking, is exempt. Each time someone tries to enter with a forbidden item drawn, the warrior statues repeat, "*Enter in peace.*"

When the characters enter the grand hall, read:
The furniture in this room is of the same make as the furnishings found in the Crystal Cave and the Water Palace. On the table, the decanter and the glasses emit the same tinkling melody that sounded in the Crystal Cave.

Dungeoneering (DC 9): The decanter and the glasses must have been carved from perfect pieces of the crystal from the Crystal Cave.

The singing glasses and the decanter are valuable (50 gp per character). They are the "rocks" that can be used to teach the birds in the **Master Bedroom** to sing (see page 116).

Horned King

Encounter Level 4 or 5

Setup

Kalbon, Horned King (K)
2 caryatid columns (C)
2 pixie archers (P)

Soryth senses that intruders are meddling with the magic binding the fountain. She sends Kalbon to check on what is happening, and he and his slaves arrive as soon as the characters reenter the **Entry Hall** after solving the first of the puzzles. Caryatid columns become apparent when they act, which is only after a character draws a weapon or an implement; see "Tactics."

Just after the characters reenter the hall, read:
From the inverted water surface above, a dark figure plummets into the hall. The scent of brimstone precedes this bulky, orange-skinned humanoid, who has massive arms, batlike wings, and a thorny hide. As he lands, his burning eyes fall on you.

"You are too late, fools," he says, "but I welcome you. You're just in time to die."

Pixies armed with bows drop out of the water after him, falling only to be caught in fountain water and placed, flying, just above the floor.

Insight (DC 9): The pixies wear the glazed look of all the fey slaves of Kalbon and Soryth.

If the caryatid columns activate, read:
The carved columns that flank the palace doors change from statues to lifelike humanoids. Each one's scimitar turns to steel. These beings of stone march toward you.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light.

Doors: The outer doors are open; the inner doors are as the characters left them.

Fountain: The fountain is difficult terrain. Due to the spiraling water, a creature standing in the fountain treats all squares beyond the fountain as if they were lightly obscured.

Furniture: The furnishings are difficult terrain.

Statues: These figures are blocking terrain.

Development

Pixies: The characters could have been merciful to the leprechaun in Session 4, merciful to Ariel in Session 7, and merciful to Hamish and Argus Session 11. A character might be wearing the Senaliesse chrysanthemum from Session 11. If any two of these possibilities are true, the charm on the pixies breaks before combat begins. They call the characters "friends of the fey" and flee the encounter, despite the Horned King's threats to catch and eat them.

Otherwise, when each pixie is first bloodied, it snaps out of its charmed state (Insight DC 9 to notice). Afraid of Kalbon, it keeps fighting. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check can influence a pixie to stop fighting. Soryth's power still prevents the pixies from helping the characters.

When they stop fighting, the pixies fly out of the hall and into the garden.

2 Pixie Archers (P) **Level 2 Artillery**
Tiny fey humanoid

HP 30; **Bloodied** 15 — **Initiative** +4
AC 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14 — **Perception** +8
Speed 4, fly 6 (altitude limit 1) — Low-light vision

Standard Actions

Rapier (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage.

Longbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 4 damage.

Fey Shot (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Effect: The pixie uses *longbow* twice.

Pixie Dust (charm) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Area burst 1 within 5 (creatures in the burst); +7 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target is dazed and gains no benefit from concealment or invisibility until the end of the pixie's next turn.

Skills Stealth +9

Str 6 (-1)	**Dex** 17 (+4)	**Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 12 (+2)	**Int** 12 (+2)	**Cha** 12 (+2)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment leather armor, rapier, longbow, 20 arrows

Kalbon, Horned King (K) Level 4 Elite Brute (Leader)
Medium immortal humanoid (devil), cambion

HP 132; **Bloodied** 66 — **Initiative** +4
AC 16, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15 — **Perception** +8
Speed 6, fly 6 — Darkvision
Resist 10 fire
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Burning Anger ✦ **Aura** 1
While Kalbon is bloodied, any enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 5 fire damage.

Clumsy Flier
Kalbon takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls while flying.

Devilish Tactics
An ally flanking with Kalbon deals 1d6 extra damage.

Triumphant Surge
Kalbon gains 10 temporary hit points each time he bloodies an enemy or reduces an enemy to 0 hit points or fewer.

Standard Actions

Slam ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage.

Gore ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 4 damage, and Kalbon pushes the target up to 2 squares.

Relentless Advance ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Kalbon uses *gore*, then shifts up to 2 squares to a square adjacent to an enemy, and then uses *slam*. If he hits the same target with both attacks, he knocks that target prone.

Horned King's Assault ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Requirement: Kalbon must move to a square adjacent to the blast's origin square during the same turn he uses this power.
Attack: Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 4 damage, and Kalbon pushes the target up to 2 squares and knocks the target prone.
Effect: Kalbon shifts to a square on the edge of the blast at least 3 squares from the origin square.

Skills Acrobatics +9, Athletics +11, Intimidate +10

Str 18 (+6)	**Dex** 15 (+4)	**Wis** 12 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	**Int** 12 (+3)	**Cha** 17 (+5)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Supernal

Tactics

Kalbon: This fiend's motivating traits are his cruelty and fury. Kalbon uses *horned king's assault* on his first turn even if doing so provokes opportunity attacks. He prefers to use *gore* on his foes, incorporating *slam* with *relentless advance* when he can. The cambion takes risks to attack characters whom he thinks he can bloody or knock unconscious. When *burning anger* activates, Kalbon tries to stay close to more foes. He fights to the death, promising Soryth's worst vengeance as he falls.

Caryatid Columns: The columns stay in *body of stone* form, rolling initiative only when a character draws a weapon or an implement other than a staff.

2 Caryatid Columns (C)	**Level 3 Elite Brute**
Medium natural animate (construct)	
HP 110; **Bloodied** 55	**Initiative** +1
AC 15, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 14	**Perception** +2
Speed 6	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	
Traits	
Body of Stone	
Before the caryatid column takes its first turn, it has resist 25 to all damage. Once it activates, the column loses this resistance until the encounter ends.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Scimitar** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage, or 1d8 + 20 damage if the column scores a critical hit.	
ǂ **Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The column uses *scimitar* twice.	
Triggered Actions	
Guardian's Pursuit ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy willingly leaves a square adjacent to the column.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The column shifts up to 3 squares closer to the triggering enemy.	
Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 10 (+1) **Wis** 12 (+2)	
Con 15 (+3) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 3 (-3)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

They treat Kalbon as an ally. If, at any time, no characters are wielding weapons or implements, aside from a staff, the columns move back to their posts and then resume their inert *body of stone* state. If the players fail to figure this out, allow an Insight check (DC 9) for the characters to do so.

Pixie Archers: These fey snipe as they fly around the fringes of the battle. They use *pixie dust* only when they can avoid hitting an ally.

Conclusion

When Kalbon is defeated, the characters are free to explore the rest of the grand hall. Use the sections below as necessary.

The Fountain

As the characters approach the fountain, read:
As you near the fountain, the translucent forms of two beautiful nymphs clad in gossamer gowns become evident amid the flow. The aquatic spirits chase one another in a chaotic spiral through the air all the way up to another water surface, defying gravity high above.

Arcana (DC 13): These spirits are not really nymphs. They are elemental spirits given that shape.

Perception (DC 13): Beyond the inverted water above, the faint sound of chanting is audible.

Soryth has bound the spirits in the fountain to her power. Normally, they help carry visitors to the upper level. Now, they cannot do so until those who would pass perform the proper rites, which alerts the hag.

If the characters speak to them, the nymphs say: *"Soryth bound us to bar passage to all until day conquers night and rocks teach birds to sing."*

The spirits say no more than this, although they repeat the phrase if asked. Otherwise, they carry on with their game, oblivious to anything except being attacked. The spirits are immune to damage. If characters attack them, they sink back into the fountain and rise again in a few seconds to continue their play.

A character can climb the wall (Athletics DC 30) up to the inverted water surface 30 feet overhead. Doing so is of little use. The water is a barrier that can be passed only by the spirits carrying a would-be visitor through from the fountain below.

The nymphs' speech hints at the puzzles that await in the **Master Bedroom** and the **Steward's Quarters.** Characters can return to the fountain when both of the puzzles are solved.

When the characters return successful, read:
"Now we shall serve you as we may," the nymphs say. They form the water into the shape of a spiral staircase, winding all the way up to the water above.

After the nymphs create the water stairway, go to **Ending the Session**.

Master Bedroom

Squawking sounds can be heard coming from this room while the characters are in the grand hall.

When the characters open the door, read:
A fine bed, plush couches, and ornate wooden furniture are only some of the wonders of this luxurious bedroom. Upon the floor, a mosaic depicts the cycle of the seasons. High above, in a transparent dome, songbirds sit upon gilded perches, each bird squawking instead of singing. Covering the back wall, an enormous tapestry portrays Porpherio and Caerwyn standing in front of a crystal in a glade. Around the couple are creatures from the world and the Feywild, from stags and lions to unicorns and owlbears. All the creatures have their heads raised and their mouths open, as if joining in a shared song.

Arcana (DC 13): The birds are magical in nature, perhaps constructs or very realistic illusions.

Nature (DC 13): None of these birds is singing. They all just squawk unnaturally.

The characters must teach the songbirds to sing the song of the crystals, which has been heard in various places throughout the adventure. This can be done if a character recalls the music heard in the bowers in the garden, in the Water Palace, in the Crystal Cave, or from the crystal items in the **Entry Hall.** The characters can accomplish this in a few ways.

Arcana (DC 21): The character uses a *ghost sound* cantrip (or another power you deem appropriate) to reproduce the music.

Diplomacy (DC 21): The character sings or whistles the right notes.

Crystal Decanter and Glasses: If the characters bring out the crystal glasses or the decanter from the entry hall, the birds soon mimic the music.

When the birds hear the right music, read:
One by one, the songbirds pick up the tune. From the chaotic squawking emerges a rippling, soothing sound of birds chirping in harmony.

Treasure: Stowed in a wardrobe is a magic item you determine using the Treasure Table, page 66.

Steward's Quarters

When the characters open the door, read:
Scents of brimstone and burned wood waft from the open door, and the room contains gloom that light from the hall can't brighten. Fine furnishings here—a desk, bookcases, and more—are all charred or smashed. On the floor, a soot stain and dark arcane runes eclipse a mosaic of the sun. A tapestry, depicting Porpherio and Caerwyn dressed in wedding attire in front of this palace, covers the back wall. The domed ceiling glitters like the night sky.

Arcana (DC 9): The runes here are the cause of the darkness and brimstone smell in this room. They can be undone, but care must be taken to clean the mosaic off.

Heal (DC 9): The runes are written in blood.

Religion (DC 21): The magic used here is diabolical in nature, so divine energy is the best to counter it.

In this room, the characters must clean the soot and blood from the sun mosaic. They must unweave the magic carefully in one of the following ways—one character making a check while other characters can assist using other skills on the list.

Arcana (DC 21): The character controls the magic as it is undone.

Religion (DC 13): The character prays or channels divine energy into the circle, countering its evil.

Thievery (DC 21): The character carefully wipes away the runes and soot as the magic weakens.

Success: The magical darkness is purged.

Failure: The magic of the runes gives out, but it does so with an explosion of hellfire. Each character takes 1d10 fire damage from the explosion.

When the magic is undone, read:
As soon as the mosaic is free of stain and the sun is revealed, daylight flows in through the transparent dome above.

This is "day conquering night," one of the two acts necessary to unlock **The Fountain** (see the previous page).

Treasure: In the desk, the characters can find an ivory box with gold inlay (20 gp per character), inside which is a pair of vials (two *potions of healing*).

Ending the Session

To end the session, read:
The inverted water wavers and disappears as the water staircase connects to it. From somewhere up there, you hear a female scream.

The session concludes as the characters climb the water stairs leading up to the roof garden.

Reward

Each character gains 450 XP for solving the puzzles and defeating Kalbon. Grant each character 100 extra XP if they spared the pixies. A character who has gained all the experience possible in this adventure now has 3,750 XP and advances to level 4.

Treasure: Valuables can be found in the **Entry Hall,** the **Master Bedroom,** and the **Steward's Quarters**, all described above.

Session 13: Ever After

In the previous session, the characters defeated Kalbon. This session begins as they ascend to the upper levels of the Palace of Spires.

When everyone is ready to begin, read:
Near the top of the spiral water stairway, a fresh-faced, female half-elf who has black hair walks gracefully among statues in a garden house that has a clear dome. Her plain gray robes and gnarled staff are odd, considering her breathtaking beauty.

Through the open doors on either side of the house is rooftop palace garden. To the left side, the garden has a mound upon which Juliana reclines, unmoving.

When the fey female notices you step onto the landing, her lips twist into a frown. "No longer have we cause for conflict. I have what I desire, and I forgive your trespasses. Serve me, and I shall grant your fondest wishes."

The hag is unwilling to back down now that she has distributed the souls of Caerwyn and Juliana as she wished. She knows that she can raise Kalbon from the dead if need be. When it becomes clear the characters do not want an alliance or that violence is inevitable, continue with the **Soryth Returns** tactical encounter.

Soryth Returns

Encounter Level 5

Setup

Soryth (S)
2 xivort slashers (X)

Characters start within 1 square of the water stair, which is the pool on the map.

Soryth (S) **Level 5 Solo Controller (Leader)**
Medium fey humanoid, hag

HP 252; **Bloodied** 126 — **Initiative** +4
AC 19, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18 — **Perception** +9
Speed 6 — Low-light vision
Saving Throws +5; **Action Points** 2

Standard Actions

Compelling Staff (charm, psychic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 2 damage, and the target makes a melee or ranged basic attack against a target of Soryth's choice. A ranged basic attack made in this way provokes no opportunity attacks. If the target's attack misses, the target takes 5 psychic damage.

Nightmare Charm (charm, fear, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +8 vs. Will
Hit: 2d8 + 4 psychic damage, and Soryth slides the target up to 4 squares.

Nightmare Compulsion ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Effect: Soryth makes two basic attacks.

Visions of Desire (charm, illusion, psychic) ✦ **Encounter**
Requirement: Soryth must not be bloodied.
Attack: Area burst 2 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +8 vs. Will
Hit: 2d8 + 6 psychic damage, and Soryth slides the target up to 4 squares toward the burst's origin square. A target that slides into or adjacent to the origin square is immobilized (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, Soryth slides the target up to 2 squares toward the burst's origin square, and the target is slowed (save ends).

Move Actions

Dream Step (teleportation) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Effect: Soryth teleports herself and one creature within 5 squares of her up to 10 squares. Soryth and the creature are invisible to all but each other until the end of Soryth's next turn.

Minor Actions

Dream Seeds ✦ **Recharge** when no twig blights are present
Effect: Four twig blight seedlings appear within 10 squares of Soryth. None can appear adjacent to an enemy, and all must appear on natural terrain. The twig blights take their turns just after Soryth in the initiative order.

Triggered Actions

Field of Delusions (charm, illusion, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy starts its turn within 3 squares of Soryth while she is conscious.
Effect (No Action): Soryth slides the triggering enemy up to 2 squares, and the target must make a melee or ranged basic attack against the target's nearest ally. A ranged basic attack made in this way provokes no opportunity attacks. If the target's attack misses, the target takes 5 psychic damage.

Skills Arcana +10, Bluff +11, Insight +9, Stealth +9
Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 15 (+4)
Con 15 (+4) **Int** 16 (+5) **Cha** 19 (+6)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven, Giant
Equipment robes, staff

When the battle begins, read:
Radiant with power, the now-beautiful hag raises her staff aloft. "Love and faith have been the keys to my dominion over this place," she says. "Now, I command this isle. Whatever fine emotion motivates you, pathetic fools, it shall also be your undoing!"

From the thick foliage of the roof garden, Soryth's sword-wielding xivorts creep toward you, their bulbous orange eyes flickering with malice.

Soryth quickly calls forth twig blights (see **Tactics**).

When she does so, read:
The hag laughs, and foul energy washes over the garden. Dead branches, roots, and foliage form into small, evil-looking plant creatures.

Soryth becomes aware of *Soryth's bloodstone* as soon as the character holding it starts his or her turn, whether the character presents the stone or not.

When Soryth senses the bloodstone, read:
A shadow of doubt darkens the hag's youthful face, and as she looks at you, she shudders. "A foul trinket," she says. "Tricks of jealous fey that owe me blood. I shall deal with them after your failure is complete."

Tactics

All the monsters know about the map edges (see **Features of the Area**).

Soryth: The hag opens with *visions of desire*, then uses *dream seeds* to enable her twig blights to hinder the party. Whenever she can, she uses *nightmare compulsion* to slide a character adjacent to her with *nightmare charm* and follow up with *compelling staff*. She might also use *dream step* to cull a character from the party. Otherwise, she is unafraid to enter melee when she can, using *field of delusions* against her foes and her aura to benefit allies.

Twig Blight and Xivorts: These creatures work together to attack with combat advantage and protect Soryth. When Soryth is defeated, the twig blights die and the xivorts flee.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright daylight.

Bushes: These plants are difficult terrain, and bush squares are lightly obscured.

Doors: These clear doors are open.

Map Edges: While Soryth is alive, if a creature moves off the edge of the map, even inside the garden house, that creature is teleported to the square adjacent to the edge on the opposite side of the map. The creature then continues its movement.

Mound: Moving up this hill is difficult terrain.

Statues: The Medium figures are blocking terrain. Large statues are difficult terrain, and a creature can use the statue to gain partial cover.

Tree: This old oak is 30 feet high (Athletics DC 9 to climb), and the trunk is blocking terrain. Above 10 feet, leaves render the area lightly obscured.

Water Stair: This "pool" is solid ground during the battle.

Twig Blight Seedling **Level 3 Minion Skirmisher**
Small fey humanoid (plant)

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +6
AC 17, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 14 **Perception** +2
Speed 5 (forest walk), climb 5 Low-light Vision

Standard Actions

Claw (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 5 poison damage, plus 2 poison damage if the target is granting combat advantage to the seedling.

Triggered Actions

Blighter's Dodge ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An attack misses the seedling.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The seedling shifts 1 square.

Skills Stealth +9

Str 8 (+0)	**Dex** 17 (+4)	**Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 10 (+1)	**Int** 6 (-1)	**Cha** 10 (+1)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Elven

2 Xivort Slashers (X) **Level 1 Skirmisher**
Small fey humanoid

HP 26; **Bloodied** 13 **Initiative** +4
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13 **Perception** +1
Speed 5 Darkvision

Standard Actions

Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.

Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage.

Triggered Actions

Cunning Step ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the slasher is hit by an attack.
Effect (Free Action): The slasher shifts 1 square.

Shadow Step (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the slasher hits it.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The slasher teleports to another square adjacent to the triggering enemy.

Skills Bluff +5, Stealth +7

Str 13 (+1)	**Dex** 14 (+2)	**Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 10 (+0)	**Int** 10 (+0)	**Cha** 11 (+0)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment leather armor, short sword, 4 daggers

Development

Juliana: Juliana is unconscious.
Heal (DC 13): Her life is fading quickly.
Religion (DC 21): Her soul is not within her body.

Conclusion

When the characters defeat Soryth, read:
The hag falls to her knees, bitter defeat written upon her perfect face. "Oh, Kalbon," she says, "would that I were a devil, so that I might have your company in the Hells."

The beauty of the hag's form peels away as it takes the form of pure light, and she screams. When the light finishes pulling free, it flits over to touch Juliana, then it flies from the garden into a white dome nearby. Soryth, again a twisted crone, is left silent.

Continue with **High Garden**.

High Garden

When the characters defeat Soryth, Juliana is still alive, and her soul has returned to her body.

When the characters have defeated Soryth, read:
At the topmost garden, two flowerbeds of red and white roses flank a broad cobblestone avenue that leads to a domed structure of white stone. The light from Soryth went into that dome.

Ragnar and Uma suddenly materialize in a toadstool circle nearby.

"You have succeeded beyond all we dared hope," Uma says. "With the hag's power broken, all her enchantments are dispelled, and the palace is open to us once again."

"Fell deeds well done," says Ragnar with a grin. "Now, it's time for your reward."

If Orlando died, the agents have his body with them. Ragnar has not forgotten his oath of vengeance against characters who slew Basal, but he set that aside for the moment. After slaying any xivorts that escaped the rooftop, Green Fey and Summer Fey come up from the grand hall as Uma and Ragnar speak with the characters. Familiar faces—such as Robin, Nettle, Cobweb, Kelindria, and Peaseblossom, as well as (perhaps) Ariel, Hamish, and Argus—are among them. Orlando also comes up the stairs if he lives.

Juliana recovers soon after, and she is reunited with Orlando. If Orlando is dead, Juliana is heartbroken. Uma comforts her, saying, *"Fear not, dear one. The Fountain All Heal can restore your love to you. Let us go."*

When all is said and done, Ragnar and Uma lead the characters to **The Tomb**.

The Tomb

When the characters enter the tomb, read:
The fey lead you inside the white dome. You see that from the inside, the dome is transparent. Within it is a tomb, its occupants resting eternally beneath the sun and stars. Two white marble sarcophagi—one carved in the likeness of Porpherio, the other Caerwyn—are side by side upon a circular dais. An elegant fountain, whose waters flow along a small channel before exiting the tomb in a waterfall along the back of the palace, is all that separates the stone coffins.

If a character touches a sarcophagus, it becomes transparent, revealing the perfectly preserved body of Porpherio or Caerwyn within. The waters within the tomb comprise the **Fountain All Heal**.

Fountain All Heal

When you are ready, read:
Uma gestures to the pure water bubbling up between the sarcophagi. "This is the Fountain All Heal," she says. "Drink from it, if you will, and make the wish that was offered you. But let me drink first, so that we can keep our promise that the fountain should not bind you to this isle."

Uma takes a drink of the water, then says aloud, "I wish for the archfey, Oran the Green Lord and Tiandra the Summer Queen, to know what has come to pass here and to join us if they wish."

Two forms materialize in the tomb. One takes shape, amid the smell of a thriving forest, as a mighty male eladrin bedecked in a mask of green leaves and clothes that look like living plants. His dark eyes grimly survey the room. The other form takes shape in a warm glow, until a radiant female eladrin dressed in gold, jewels, and booming flowers appears. Her smile warms the chamber.

All the fey bow low to the newcomers.

"All is as it should be. You have done a mighty deed," says Oran, looking at you.

"Yes," says Tiandra, "mighty indeed. You have earned your drink, and freedom from its binding."

"But first things first," says Oran. "Uma has partaken. Drink, Ragnar, and make your wish."

Ragnar smiles and drinks, saying "I wish for prowess and the authority among the fey that is my due."

"It is yours," says Tiandra.

"But freedom I do not grant you," Oran says, his voice rising. "No, Ragnar, you shall be bound to this island, its greatest master and greatest servant. To those who call this place home, you shall ever after be known as the Green Man, the name of Ragnar forgotten. Now, go!"

Ragnar disappears in a flurry of falling leaves.

"Uma," says Tiandra, "you shall take the place of Rosaline on the bald hill, serving the fey of this island for me." Tiandra smiles. "I know you wish it."

With a bow and a sad smile, Uma says, "Yes, my queen. I wish to remain here for a while."

"Now, heroes," says Oran, "drink and wish, unburdened by the price the fountain exacts."

"What shall you have?" asks Tiandra.

Drinking from the fountain brings a character back to full health and counts as an extended rest. The water can restore life, and the archfey use it on behalf of any character who died. Tiandra allows Juliana a wish if Orlando died—when she uses it, Orlando is made whole and lives again, his soul intact.

The fountain is specific in interpretations, and it can neither alter the past nor grant experience points. If he or she wants to, a player can invent a tale about how the character's wish comes true and tell the story to the others. Here are some possible wishes and how they could manifest.

Ability Score Increase: The character's lowest ability score increases by 2—the fountain shores up weaknesses rather than increasing strengths.

Wealth: Within a month, the character receives 3,400 gold pieces, a fortune to a commoner.

Magic Item: Within a month, the character receives an uncommon magic item of up to four levels higher than the character's level.

Influence: Within a month, the character receives a position of influence in a realm of his or her choice. In that region, the character gains a +2 bonus to all Charisma-based checks involving non-hostile creatures familiar with the character's status.

Happiness: Within a month, the character receives an intangible, fulfilling reward of the player's choice. When this event occurs, the character's inner contentment grants him or her resist 5 psychic.

Longevity: The fountain adds 100 years to the character's natural life span, and the character gains a +2 bonus to death saving throws, saving throws against poison effects, and checks against disease.

Something Else: Improvise within the above parameters if a character wishes for something else. If the wish benefits someone other than the wisher, it is more likely to come true. Tiandra and Oran might reward a truly selfless wish, such as the revival of the original Crystalbrook search party, with a boon. This boon is a fey gift of up to five levels higher than the character's level. See *Player's Option: Heroes of the Feywild* for more on fey gifts.

If a character wishes for the revival of the slain members of the search party, Tiandra indicates it is so. The once-dead searchers are in Crystalbrook when the characters return.

Ending the Adventure

When the party is finished wishing, read:

"It is time to say goodbye," says Tiandra.

"And you must return to your own land," says Oran.

"As for Orlando and Juliana," says Tiandra, "the innocents in this game, they can stay if they wish."

"Whether you rise to greatness or live peacefully here," says Oran to the two, "this palace is yours."

Only a few loose ends remain. The archfey can clear up any mysteries about the adventure the players fail to understand. Orlando and Juliana wish to stay. However, they owe the heroes a debt of gratitude—if the characters insist they do so, the lovers return to the world. Hamish and Argus, if alive, either stay with Orlando and Juliana as the couple's servants, or the brothers return to the world alongside everyone.

When the lovers decide what they will do, read:

Tiandra says to you, "When you awaken, it will be as if from a dream. The oracle in the Crystal Cave shall remain a boon to the world for all time, but the crossing shall hereafter be closed to all but the innocent seeking refuge. Perhaps we shall meet again, but for now, sleep. Sleep . . ."

You awaken in the warm sun in a meadow full of wildflowers on the edge of the Sildaine Forest. Crystalbrook is within sight, its gates open.

Three weeks have passed since the characters left in search of the Crystal Cave. Weather that wracked the region for a year vanished completely a few days ago. Lady Tamora and Lord Carric have begun to reforge ties, and Sildaine fey can be seen among the folk of Crystalbrook. Healing might take a little while, but the process has already begun.

Orlando and Juliana are greeted with much joy and celebration if they returned to the world. If they did not, the lovers have already used magic in the Palace of Spires to contact Lady Tamora and Lord Carric. The two leaders believe the characters' account of events on the island to be truthful and hold a feast in the party's honor. (The leaders dispatch hunters and wardens to recover the original search party's bodies if necessary.) In Crystalbrook and the Sildaine Forest, the characters enjoy the status of heroes.

Count Varis honors his promise upon the return of the characters. He gives each character 50 gold pieces and publicly awards each one a silver medal of honor. The characters are also celebrated in Sybar.

Reward

At the end of the session, each character gains 500 XP for defeating Soryth, reuniting the lovers, dealing with the archfey, restoring Crystalbrook, and bringing peace to the region.

About the Author

Steve Townshend is a freelance D&D designer whose recent credits include *Monster Vault*™: *Threats to the Nentir Vale*, *Madness at Gardmore Abbey*™, and *Heroes of the Feywild*™. The banderhobbs and Oublivae, Demon Queen of Desolation, are two of his favorite creations for D&D.

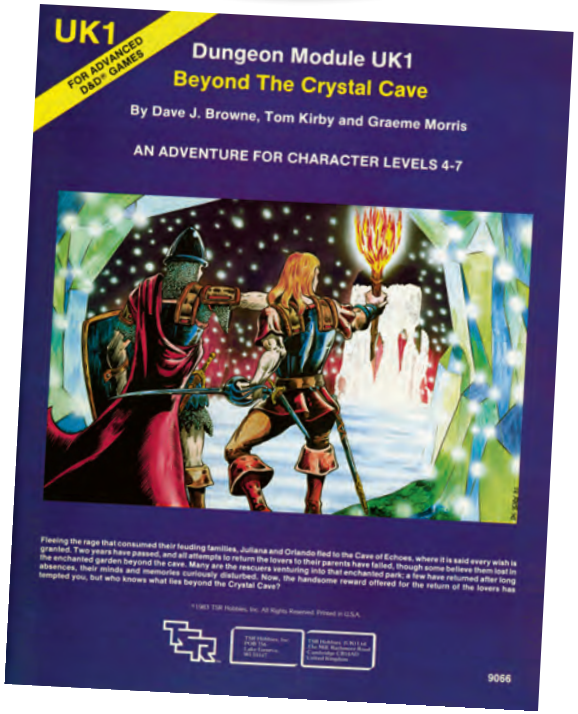
Afterword: A Pioneer Among Adventures

Designer's notes by Steve Townshend

Nearly thirty years ago, *UK1: Beyond the Crystal Cave* became the first Dungeons & Dragons adventure of its kind. Designed by British writers Dave J. Browne, Tom Kirby, and Graeme Morris, it was also the first module produced by TSR Ltd, the recently formed United Kingdom subsidiary of TSR, Inc.

The UK series of modules focused on a different play experience from the standard combat-oriented style of early D&D adventures. Roleplaying, problem-solving, and folklore were key elements of the UK modules, and in some adventures—such as the original *Beyond the Crystal Cave*—combat was rather severely punished. The original adventure transplanted the Romeo and Juliet story into a Faerielike subdimension called Porpherio's Garden, which existed on an island in the world of Greyhawk. The characters in the adventure had Shakespearean names and motivations. There were no villains whatsoever, and apart from a few dangers in the cave leading to Porpherio's Garden, the adventurers had no true adversaries. The way to "win" in *Beyond the Crystal Cave* was simply to solve the garden's puzzles, avoid fey trickery, avoid combat, and ask the lovers to come home.

This new version of *Beyond the Crystal Cave* retains many encounters and locations from the original, while adapting the adventure for use during a season of Dungeons & Dragons Encounters™ play. Like the original module, this version focuses on interaction, puzzle-solving, mood, flavor, and story elements. Although it follows the structure of the original, it adds villains into the mix.


UK1
FOR ADVANCED D&D® GAMES
Dungeon Module UK1
Beyond The Crystal Cave
By Dave J. Browne, Tom Kirby and Graeme Morris
AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 4-7
9066

Due to the nature of the adaptation, this adventure is somewhat atypical of the Dungeons & Dragons Encounters seasons that preceded it, and the most successful groups will likely be the ones in which the players and the DM focus on a more immersive play experience exploring the world, the puzzles, and the story, rather than the tried-and-true combat of the week. As it was in *UK1*, so it is in this adaptation of *Beyond the Crystal Cave*.

Special Notes for the Dungeon Master

From the introduction in the original adventure:

It will quickly become apparent to the DM that this is no ordinary adventure. It is possible for a group of 1st level characters to wander gently through the garden and succeed where a bullying group of 8th level characters could well fail. Diplomacy and tact will win the day where violence and aggression will lose it.

Normally the DM would reward experience points in relation to the number and type of monsters killed. It is strongly suggested that for this adventure experience points are awarded on a different basis. Success in an encounter with garden creatures may be judged as acquiring information or help without fighting and without antagonising the individual or group. In some cases this will prove extremely difficult. After successful encounters (usually an encounter can be considered successful if the party leaves the monsters on friendly terms) players may be awarded experience points as if they had overcome the monster(s). In making judgments, the DM should use his customary discretion, probably using as a yardstick the attitude of players during encounters.

. . . the whole scenario will be a sore temptation to many players to behave in an aggressive fashion—killing every monster in sight and taking their treasure. This kind of behaviour will yield them little in this adventure.

. . . To conclude this introduction, the authors wish you well in running "Beyond the Crystal Cave" and they sincerely hope you have *fun* doing so. The adventure is designed to be both amusing and irritating to players, though simply amusing to the Dungeon Master.

COMING NEXT MONTH

NEVER SAY DIE

By Claudio Pozas

Stripped of your armor and weapons, you are cast into a maze of thickets and hunted like rabbits. If you want revenge, you must first survive Yeenoghu's evil hunters. A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 5–7.

COURT OF THE DARK PRINCE

By John "Ross" Rossomangno

An angel of Kord is trapped in the Argent Palace on Azzagrat, where the demon lord Graz'zt holds sway. Descend into the Abyss, if you dare! A D&D adventure for characters of levels 28–30.

THE VILLAGE OF HOMMLET

By Gary Gygax & Andy Collins

Ten years after the fall of the Temple of Elemental Evil, the village of Hommlet still lives in dangerous times. Bandits and strange monsters are gathering at a ruined moathouse on the village's outskirts, and brave adventurers are needed to clear it out. This 4th Edition D&D adventure for characters of levels 3–5 updates the classic AD&D™ adventure module T1, *The Village of Hommlet* by Gary Gygax.

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